Chronicles of Eris
by RavenOutlander

Summary

After bringing back Marian from the past, Emma is left to deal with the consequences and repercussions of that decision.

Two months of silent treatment from Regina is enough to push Emma completely over the edge. Together she and Ruby jump into a portal to the Enchanted Forest in order to figure out where they belong in the world.

Will Emma be the same when she returns?

What will happen when Emma’s fling—who happens to be an immortal goddess—shows up in Storybrooke?

Will Happy’s obsession with fish ever cease?
We’re Going On A Trip With Our Magical Bean!

Two months. That was how long Emma had been given the silent treatment from Regina Mills. No matter how many times she had apologized—thirty-three times—or how many times she had sat in front of the mayoral glass door, begging and sobbing like a baby to be let in so that the mayor could yell, curse, insult, spit on, or at least fireball her—a pathetic twelve times—Regina was adamant on never speaking to Emma Swan ever again.

Around a week ago, Emma had stopped trying altogether and begun to grant Regina the space that she so obviously required. When Emma dropped Henry off, she made certain that she stayed in the car and out of the mayor’s way. When reports needed to be delivered to her majesty, David was eager to take them for the Sheriff.

However, this game of silent treatment was eating Emma from the inside out and she couldn’t take it anymore. The Sheriff wasn’t eating properly, wasn’t sleeping at all and was a hollow of her former self. When Emma looked in the mirror all she could see was the sixteen-year-old foster girl who just wanted a home and a family. Frankly, she couldn’t take it anymore and seeing as it wasn’t just herself she was affecting but her family as well. Henry was constantly worried about her, every so often offering to talk to Regina for her, Mary Margaret and David had tried several hope speeches already and were now recycling them.

Two days ago, Ruby came to talk to her. By courtesy of Mary Margaret, of course. She was planning on leaving Storybrooke with a bean that Tiny had grown for her to search for a wolf-pack in the Enchanted Forest. The offer to go with was as clear as day. At first Emma just asked her to give her a few days to think it over, but the more Emma thought about it, the more she thought that it was a good idea.

Emma’s been an orphan on the run for so long that she knew all the ins-and-outs. However, never before had she gone jumping across dimensions in search for something she didn’t even know what it was. Storybrooke was her home and it always would be, but she couldn’t continue being as unhappy as she currently was. It wasn’t fair to anyone if she never returned from the bottom of a bottle.

Today Emma stood by the wishing well, fidgeting nervously with her hands. She was leaving Storybrooke with nothing but a travel pack, a map of the Enchanted Forest and Ruby Lucas by her side. Mary Margaret and David stood off to the side with baby Neal and Henry whilst Granny helped them tighten the last of their things, going through a list of things that they had already gone over at least ten times.

Goodbyes were never Emma’s thing. She never looked back or went back so she never left notes or anything like that. It was always just a quick getaway with her backpack and her baby blanket. Though she wasn’t that person anymore. Her roots were in Storybrooke even if she and Henry had stayed a little while in New York. When the stinging feeling in her heart finally subsided and she no longer felt disgusted with herself for ruining every good thing in her life, then she would return home.

‘Enough, Granny,’ sighed Ruby in annoyance. ‘We know what we’re doing.’

The older woman sharply looked up at her granddaughter, offended by her words. For a moment she consider smacking some sense into Ruby, make her see the pain that she was in for practically bidding her only blood relative she had live goodbye for what would most likely be forever. However, now wasn’t the time for scoldings.
'Can ye blame me for wanting to delay ye a wee bit longer?' scoffed Granny, crossing her arms over her bosom. She turned towards Emma, grasping the blonde by her ear.

'Ow, Granny. Seriously—'

'You keep her in one piece, ye here me, child?'

'Yes, I’ll keep her safe. Just release my damn ear, woman,’ hissed Emma, trying to pry the wolf queen’s grip off her.

'Gran, come on,’ scolded Ruby good heartedly.

The Charming’s moved in for their own farewells, in tears that the two would now no longer be constant in their lives. For once in her life Emma didn’t mind allowing Mary Margaret and David to envelope her like they did. It was also the first time in her life that she truly realized that she truly was going to miss a home once she left it. The time trip with Hook made her realize that this was home, but this farewell only confirmed it.

Henry was all but crying into his mother’s shoulder now, clutching onto her red leather jacket as he mumbled incoherently. If he knew it would do any good he would be begging her to stay, but Henry knew the pain his mother was in, even if he didn’t fully understand it. Instead he made promises of how he was going to be a good boy, listen to his grandparents and Mom until she came back.

Emma released a heavy sigh, allowing Henry to bury his neck into her golden locks. It wasn’t fair to him that he now had to live without her for an indefinite amount of time. After all his fake memories of being raised by her was still quite fresh. Emma imagined how this must feel like, being abandoned like this all of a sudden.

'It won’t be forever, kid,’ Emma found herself promising. ‘I’ll come and visit in between. I’ll be back in a month’s time for your birthday, if not before.’

Pulling away, Emma found herself staring into the saddest pair of brown eyes that she had ever seen. Her heart could shatter then and there with how much it began to ache. Guilt suddenly overwhelmed her and she almost considered calling this whole thing off. Almost.

‘You swear?’ Henry’s voice cracked with emotion, lip trembling. ‘You gotta swear it, Ma. ‘Cause you never break your swears.’

An amused chuckle escaped Emma’s lips as she nodded, her own tears spilling from her cheeks. ‘I swear it, kid. You better have hot cocoa and cinnamon waiting for me when I get back, okay?’

Henry nodded his head enthusiastically, smiling in spite of the tears, ‘Deal.’

The Savior drew her son in for one more hug, placing several kisses on her tuft of brown hair. She looked up over Henry’s head, catching her mother’s eyes. She too was crying, but her smile shone brighter than Emma had ever seen it before. David’s too.

They all knew how badly Emma needed a getaway in order to clear her head. Seeing as they were finally in a time of peace, now was the perfect time to do it. And whilst they would all miss her terribly, they could survive without the Savior for however long she needed.

‘You have the journal I made for you?’ inquired Mary Margaret, clutching Neal closer to her chest as she rocked the baby rhythmically. ‘Oh, and the, uh, the—the map I prepared? I marked all of the watering places and rivers I remembered.’
‘Yeah, mom,’ nodded Emma reassuringly. ‘It’s still the same place it was the last time you made me check.’

‘We’re just worried about you, sweetheart,’ sighed David, forcing himself to smile. ‘It’s our jobs as parents to constantly nag you and make sure you’re going to be okay.’

‘When I get back I’ll make up for the times I should have given you a hard time as a teen,’ assured Emma, flashing a sheepish smile.

Mary Margaret smiled softly at the promise. Taking a deep breath, she nodded her head in determination, ‘Then hurry back.’

‘We should get going, Em,’ informed Ruby, lifting her pack onto her shoulders. ‘Otherwise we’re never going to leave.’

Knowing that she was right, Emma released Henry and lifted her own belongings. She had no idea what she was doing or what was waiting for her on the other side of that portal. In her experience, the Enchanted Forest had been anything but tame. Putting aside her fears and worries, Emma wiped her cheeks and began to march her way to the wolf’s side.

Tossing the bean, Ruby watched as the small plant create a roaring portal, sucking at the air around them. The two women glanced back at their family for a brief moment before turning to look at one another determinedly. Emma grabbed hold of Ruby’s hand and they each gave a comforting squeeze before they leapt into the portal. As it swallowed them whole, the ground closed up immediately, leaving no trace that the women had ever existed.

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The fire crackled in the evening air, smoke disappearing into the air, past the trees. Nighttime had settled in after the small campsite was prepared. Around the two women the night life emitted loud and clear sound, alerting that nothing was out of the ordinary. Sleeping bags were rolled out next to the fireplace as something that looked like a chicken roasted over the flames.

Emma was transfixed by the stars. The constellations were so different than The Land Without Magic’s. Not a single star appeared to be in correspondence to her home world’s. It was a good thing that Mary Margaret packed her some books regarding the sky in order for her to navigate her way in this world. Not to mention there was Ruby as well.

Growing up in the foster homes that Emma did, the sky had always been her escape. Wherever she were she would find herself on the fire escapes or the roofs of the homes she lived in, just staring up at the stars. Often she would attempt to count them and nearly end up falling asleep. The stars had always been the one constant thing in her life.

‘So,’ Ruby suddenly piped up, dropping down a large stack of wood, startling Emma out of her stupor. ‘Since we’re travel buddies, we should probably start talking to each other? You know, since we’re going to be each other’s only source of companionship for a while.’

‘Are you suggesting twenty questions or did my mother set you up to be the female version of Archie?’ deadpanned Emma, giving Ruby a blank look.

‘Well, you gave them no choice, Em. You haven’t been talking to anyone. No one knows how you’re holding up.’

Emma released a sigh as Ruby sat down on her own sleeping bag. What her friend was saying was definitely true. Never before had Emma been the type to open up about her feelings nor had she intended to start now. However, given that she was in an entirely different world now, away from
When I was eight,’ Ruby sat to attention, ready to hang onto every word that would spill from
Emma’s lips. It was adorable how she seemed to become a puppy, eager to please her master, within
the span of four words. After all, this was the farthest that anyone had gotten with Emma in two
months. ‘My older foster brothers pretended that I didn’t exist. For two whole months. It was stupid,
really. They would sit on my if I was in a chair, eat my food, scribble in my textbooks or come in the
bathroom when I was using it. It really sucked.’

The she-wolf stared at her friend sympathetically, watching as Emma wiped furiously at her cheeks.
Now Ruby could see how gravely Regina’s attitude towards Emma was affecting her. Not to
mention the horrible memories that was brought up for the younger woman because of it. Ruby
couldn’t imagine the pain that Emma was currently in.

‘I know I fucked up with Regina,’ sighed Emma, closing her eyes as she tried to reign in her
emotions. ‘But I’ve apologized, I’ve groveled, I’ve been begging like a dog for a scrap of bones just
so that she would at least yell at me—’ The Savior cut herself off, drawing in a sharp breath. ‘What
more does she want from me?’

‘She just needs time, Em,’ reassured Ruby, giving Emma a comforting look. ‘You’ll see—’

‘All I’ve done is give people time!’ spat Emma, her intense emotions sparking the flames, causing it
to crack and snap from her magic. ‘I’ve waited 28 years to be with my parents! I then waited another
year to find out that I didn’t raise my son, that it was all fake memories jammed into my head! I’ve
waited two months for Regina to forgive me for something I didn’t even realize was wrong! I didn’t
even know she was dating anyone! It’s not like I intended to screw up her life!’

Ruby allowed Emma to cry her heart out, knowing that her friend didn’t like to be touched when she
was this emotional. Though it took all of the she-wolf’s willpower not to damn it all to hell and
gather the blonde in her arms. She had known that Emma was hurt, but she never thought that it was
this severe. Hell, no one did.

‘I’m done waiting for someone to wake up and realize they want or need me,’ hissed Emma, yanking
her eyes away from Ruby and looking into the flames. ‘I’m just fucking done with it all. I’m tired of
waiting. I’m tired of fixing everyone else’s shit. It’s my life! I never asked for any of this! I never
wanted it! I don’t want it!’

Silence fell between them, animals and the fire the only sounds that filled the gap in between. What
Emma wanted wasn’t physically possible. She would always be drawn back to Storybrooke and she
would always fight against oppressing forces, because she was a hero. However, Emma was a
runner too. Once she starts it would be long time before she found it possible to stop once again.

However, Ruby wasn’t anything if not loyal to her friends and family. Searching for where she
belonged could wait as long as it needed to whilst she helped Emma find the fire in herself to
continue on. Emma might not want time but it was all she needed to heal now. Once she had it, she
would go home for good, Ruby was certain of it.

‘You should get some rest,’ informed Ruby, a weak smile making its way onto her lips. ‘I’ll wake
you once the food’s done?’

Not wanting to argue, physically and emotionally spent, Emma nodded her head in agreement.
Tomorrow would be a long day as well as they trudged through the forest in search of what she
didn’t know. So, Emma complied by slipping into her sleeping bag and falling into a restless
slumber.
It was a couple of days of traveling on foot before they happened upon an abandoned farm where they found two horses eating grass in the meadows. Whilst it was difficult to catch each of them and even more difficult for Emma to get on the animal, but after an hour they were on the road again. Traveling on horse back would be a lot easier, not to mention they would now no longer have the deadweight of their travel packs weighing them down.

Most of the time their days were spent in silent, each occupied in their own minds and own troubling thoughts. During the nights they talked about meaningless things, small things, anything that would steer them clear of topics regarding their love lives. If one would think that Emma’s walls were high up when it came to Regina Mills then Ruby’s were reinforced with steel and burglar bars when it came to Belle French.

Ruby’s hand suddenly flew up, drawing them both to a stop. The she-wolf’s ears perked up, listening for the faintest of sounds. Emma watched her friend worriedly, waiting patiently for her to signal that it was safe to continue or that there was something wrong. Ruby turned back towards Emma, motioning with her hand that she wanted the blonde to trot closer. Emma obliged with some hesitation, her head darting around in concern.

‘What’s up?’ questioned Emma, eyes finally landing on Ruby, if only for a brief moment. ‘You hear something with those wolf ears of yours?’

‘Someone’s watching us,’ explained Ruby, mouth pulling into a thin line. ‘It’s human, and there’s only one, but I don’t know who it is and that’s my main concern right now.’

Emma nodded in understanding, scanning the forest for any sign of their “stalker”. ‘Maybe their friendly?’ offered the blonde with a small shrug.

Ruby turned towards her friend, giving her a Are you serious? look, ‘I expect this from Mary Margaret, Em. Not you.’ The she-wolf smirked slightly as she turned to look away from her. ‘I raised you better than that.’

‘Oh did you now?’ scoffed Emma, rolling her eyes. ‘So, what do you propose we do? Sniff them out?’

‘You’re hilarious,’ responded Ruby monotonously, slipping off her horse’s back.

Emma followed Ruby’s lead, not knowing what else to do and not wanting to look stupid if she remained on the animal whilst the wolf continued on foot. The Savior was anything but a pillow princess.

‘We know you’re out there! Show yourself!’

They both listened for the faintest of sounds, waiting for something to happen or someone to emerge from the trees. Before Emma could blow a raspberry, a warrior dressed in what looked like Chinese armor to her stepped out from behind a tree a few feet from their position. The warrior removed her helm, allowing her brown her to fall loosely as she approached.

‘M—Mulan,’ Emma managed to stammer out as the woman continued her approach. ‘Long time no see.’

‘Indeed it has been,’ nodded the brunette, stopping in front of the two women and placing her helmet underneath her arm. ‘I never thought I would see you in these lands again. Did you manage to fall through another portal?’
Emma rolled her eyes, ignoring the jab, ‘No, this time was intentional. I’m looking for something or someplace, I guess.’

‘Which is?’

‘I don’t know,’ shrugged Emma, petting her horse’s head uncomfortably. ‘Maybe a cure for a broken heart?’

Mulan offered a brief, yet sympathetic smile, ‘I see.’ The warrior turned towards Ruby, the she-wolf blushing slightly now that she was now the center of attention. ‘Who’s your friend?’

‘Ruby Lucas, but everyone calls her Red,’ informed Emma, ‘We’re traveling together, practically wandering aimlessly.’

Ruby nodded her head in greeting, waving her hand awkwardly, ‘Hi.’

‘Well, companionship is rare around these parts, and people you could trust even more so,’ Emma and Ruby nodded their heads in agreement, waiting for what Mulan was insinuating. ‘I’m heading south for a job, perhaps you would like to accompany me?’

Emma shrugged her shoulders, turning towards Ruby and raising a questioning eyebrow. ‘We got the time. What do you say, Rubes?’

The she-wolf offered a mischievous grin, ‘Lead the way, your highness.’

Clicking her tongue, Emma scowled at Ruby in annoyance, ‘Do not refer to me as your highness.’

‘Pillow princess it is.’

‘That. Is. Quite some tale.’

Mulan’s eyes were wide after hearing Emma’s story of running around the Enchanted Forest with Killian “Hook” Jones, messing up her parents’ first meeting and nearly disrupting the timeline and her birth. Then there was the thing with Marian as well. Hence why Mulan’s eyes were nearly popping from their sockets.

They were all seated around the makeshift fireplace that they had created, bedroll and sleeping bags prepared for the evening as they talked, catching one another up in the events of their lives, getting to know one another a little more. There wasn’t exactly time for these pleasantries the last time they had seen one another. What with having to defeat Cora and all.

The warrior was someone that Emma actually found someone to be worth her time. Sure the woman was way too uptight perhaps, a soldier through and through no doubt. However, she was easy to talk to, upfront and not once did it feel like she was judging the blonde.

‘Yeah, not one of my finer moments,’ chuckled Emma humorlessly. ‘I’ve done a lot of stupid things, but this one definitely takes the cake.’

Ruby releases a sigh, ‘She’s been wallowing for the past month at the bottom of a bottle for how things went down with Regina. It was either a road trip across worlds or the end of a barrel.’

‘It wasn’t that bad and it wouldn’t have come to that,’ scoffed Emma indignantly, picking at the grass beneath her sleeping bag.

Though Emma knew it to be true. She knew the signs and knew that death would have been the only
way out of the deep dark hole she had dug for herself. A lot of the time Emma had thought about it, found herself staring endlessly at the gun in her drawer at home. The last time that she had been this depressed was just before Henry had come and found her in that luxurious apartment in Boston. If it wasn’t for the kid, she didn’t want to think about where she would have ended up.

Ruby at least didn’t push the subject anymore than it had already been pushed, seemingly knowing that Emma didn’t want to discuss it anymore. The brunette glanced over at Mulan, searching for a way to change the subject.

‘So, tell us about this job? What exactly is it that we’re going to do?’

As Mulan went on telling about these mercenaries that raided villages, killing everyone in sight and taking what they wanted, Emma tuned them out and instead focused on the stars above as she settled back down on the sleeping bag. Even through the trees the night sky was still visible, the stars shining as brightly as ever despite the few lonely clouds here and there.

Emma wondered about her parents, if they missed her at all, if they yearned for her presence like she for theirs. She wondered if Henry thought about her as much as she thought about him, counting down the days until she would come to visit him on his birthday, even if she still hadn’t a clue of how she was going to do that. Her thoughts even went out to baby Neal, if he would know her when she came home or if she would have missed any of his milestones in a months time of being away.

As Emma closed her eyes, her mind began to wander to Regina. Playing their last shared words to one another over and over in her head. Would the woman miss her at all in this time she would be away? Would she come to regret pushing Emma for as far as she had? Was Regina even thinking of her at all?

It made Emma wonder if she would ever want to return. If Regina was going to continue giving her the cold shoulder for something that she didn’t intentionally do. After so many months spent at one another’s throat and then coming together to save Henry, Emma had honestly believed that they could become friends. Even if she had to watch Regina be happy with someone that wasn’t her, she would have been able to withstand the pain so long as Regina was in her life. However, the past two months had been total madness. Not only was it tearing Emma up from the inside out but it had affected her family too.

When and if Emma returned, she would be better. She would stay away as per Regina’s request and she would no longer even dare to glance in the other woman’s direction. After all it would save her a lot of heartache and pain as well, wouldn’t it?

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One month later.

Michael Tilman had taken his children, Ava and Nicholas, on a camping trip for the weekend. The town life was sometimes a bit overwhelming for the family of three and at times they found themselves missing the simplicity of the Enchanted Forest. Seeing as both his children quite enjoyed what mother nature had to offer them, he had figured it would be a great opportunity to make for some lost time. After all, seeing his children grow up would be his happy ending.

That fine morning, as Micael sat around the campfire with his children, roasting the rabbit that they had caught and skinned, it felt like the happiest day of his life. The birds were singing in the trees, the children were laughing, joking with one another as they carved wooden figurines with their Swiss army knives.

However, for as long as the woodcutter can remember, it never meant anything good if nature’s sounds suddenly quietened to the point where it was simply silent. Ava and Nicholas seemed to
notice the change in the atmosphere as well, their heads darting up to their father in expectation as they waited for him to tell that what to do.

The ground shook beneath their feet, their canteens toppling over. Birds suddenly took to the sky all at once in fear of what was coming their way. Then they heard the bloodthirsty roar that erupted through the trees, signaling the hunger of the beast that had made it.

Without a moments hesitation, Michael threw each of his children over his shoulder and took off in a desperate sprint. The children were panicking now, screaming and asking what was wrong. However, the woodcutter knew that if he were to stop, even for a second, whatever had appeared within the forest would surely catch up. Michael highly doubted that this creature was there for some tea and biscuits.

The sprint to the car had taken longer than the trio would have liked and the thundering footsteps that had been approaching only increased. Trees were knocked to the ground, some up rooted by the sheer strength of this beast. Michael tossed his children into the Volkswagen and soon found himself speeding down the road towards Storybrooke, every now and then glancing in the rearview mirror.

In the middle of town, Michael hit his breaks to stop his car in the middle of the four way. He scrambled out of the vehicle, ignoring the honking cars and furious townspeople. The man cupped his hands around his mouth to release the most powerful yell that he could possibly muster.

‘CYCLOPS!’
Wow! Thank you all for the wonderful comments, the kudos and the bookmarks. This isn’t my first fanfiction, but it’s the very first time I’m posting on Archive of our own. My confidence with writing had been a little low for the past two years, so I’ve held off on posting.

But I’m back baby!

Okay, so, I’ll be posting on Monday’s and Thursdays, since the one is the beginning of the week and we all need a pick me up and the other is the day before the start of the weekend and we need some energy to push through

Also, I am open to suggestions in what you would like to see. I can’t promise I’d use them, but I am going to write a whole set of "books", if you will, to my collection "An Orphan Dragon", so I desperately need inspiration for that.

Lastly, I have double checked the work on the last two chapters, but I might have missed a few things here and there. I apologize that I’m not perfect, I am only a duck.

Unfortunately.

‘Come out, puny Savior!’

Smash!

‘Come put, come out, wherever you are!’

Smash! Smash!

‘Sheldon need to pummel you good!’

Smash! Smash! Explosion.

There wasn’t a lot that Regina regretted in her long and painful life. In fact, there wasn’t one thing she regretted as her time as the Evil Queen. However, in this moment she severely regretted giving Emma the hard time she had during those two months and driving her off to the Enchanted Forest. The Queen never even thought it a possibility that Emma Swan, Storybrooke’s own personal Savior, would run off.

How the monstrosity had even made its way to Storybrooke—Well, technically she did know. Fissures between worlds weren’t all that uncommon and given that Zelena could most likely barely even spell The Dark Curse, it was bound to be possible that her alteration to it had rendered it imperfect.

‘Jesus Christ,’ crackled August’s voice over the radio. ‘He just totaled your truck, Davy Boy.’

David’s scowl imprinted on his forehead, lifting the radio to his mouth, ‘Yes, thank you. We can all
see that.’ The Sheriff released a labored sigh, trying to get his head in the game instead of lose his temper and very well cost them their lives. ‘Where’s Killian with his ship? I thought he would be here by now?’

‘He’s still searching for the cannonballs. We were drinking last night and practically rearrange everything.’

‘Of course we can’t count on those imbeciles. We might as well hand ourselves over to this beast on a silver platter,’ snapped Regina.

The cyclops had no intention to have a conversation. Hence why Regina, David and Mary Margaret were all hiding behind one of the stores, waiting for Killian and Leroy to get there ship into a position so that they could bait the cyclops over to the harbor. There, once in firing range, they would be able to take the creature down.

Ever since returning to Storybrooke, Regina’s magic was acting strange. Of course, magic in this world was different and require a different kind of kick to get started up, but Regina would rather chew her own leg off than ask for Rumplestiltskin’s help once more.

**Smash!**

The club that the cyclops had been dragging around through the streets, leaving indentations in the tar road, came down onto the shop just next to where the three were awaiting for any kind of signal from their one-handed friend. It took all of Regina’s willpower not to cry out in surprise. Suddenly she found herself eternally grateful that Henry was with Robin and his Merrymen.

And Granny.

She mustn’t forget the stubborn old bat.

They all knew what the one-eyed giant wanted. His heart was set on pummeling the Savior. How he knew of Emma’s existence, no one knew, but his instructions were very clear. If they wanted to save the town from this beast then they had to produce the product of true love to him. For whatever reason, he had some sort of beef with her.

‘Maybe we should try talking to him again?’ suggested Mary Margaret, anxiously glancing between David and Regina.

‘Yes, because the first time around clearly went so well,’ hissed Regina, unable to keep the anger from her voice. It was all she could do instead of strangle the life out of the pixie haired woman. ‘Perhaps, you’ll convince him to join your unicorn sticker club?’

‘It could be that he is just misunderstood?’

‘Misunderstood? Misunder—He ate Dopey!’

Suddenly, the entire building that had been providing them all shelter from the monster’s view was torn from where it was attached to the ground. Bricks littered the ground as the cyclops’ hand closed around it before tossing it callously onto the ground. Terrified eyes looked up to where the creature was now towering over them.

Oh, God.

‘Run!’ David’s voice sliced through the air, spurring them into action.
Their feet thundered against the pavement, Regina grateful that she was wearing boots today instead of the heels she had wanted to that morning. The cyclops was gaining on them nonetheless and if it wasn’t for the landlines that he had stumbled into, there would have been no possible way that they would have outrun him or managed to find a suitable hiding place.

Each of the breaths that filled their lungs, burned and made their eyes water. This game of cat and mouse couldn’t go on forever. All of them might be fit as a horse, but eventually they would tire or their luck would simply run out.

‘This. Isn’t. Working,’ Regina gasped out, thumping her head back against the brick wall.

If she could then she would have finished this creature off before it had even set foot in the town. However, since that wasn’t even an option, she had no choice but to count on the heroes she so often referred to as being incompetent. It was truly sad that the people she had wanted dead once upon a time, she now depended on with her life.

‘We’re all for a Plan C, Madam Mayor,’ grumbled David, leaning forward on his sword.

Mary Margaret placed her hands on her hips and looked over to her husband sharply, ‘There was a Plan B?’

‘Yeah,’ nodded David. ‘The cannon on Hook’s ship.’

‘So, what was Plan A?’

‘Emma,’ sighed David, straightening himself to his full height. ‘but since she isn’t here and not likely to be here until Henry’s birthday, we can’t use Plan A.’

‘We don’t have the Savior, I don’t have my magic. Gold is hauled up in his shop with Belle, having placed a protection spell over it and Hook is too incompetent to navigate his own ship,’ listed Regina, turning to scowl at the Charming’s. ‘So, what you’re telling me is that I’m going to die in the most pathetic way possible; eaten by an overgrown neanderthal with one eye.’

Husband and wife shared a brief look, speaking silently in that one moment. It had always annoyed Regina how well they knew one another and the connection that they shared since it only reminded her that she would never have that. Even now more so since Robin was with Marian, working on restoring what they once had and she had pushed Emma to the point where the Savior had flung herself into a portal.

‘That... is our main concern right now,’ exhaled David, his hands coming up to rest on his hips, mimicking Mary Margaret’s stance.

‘Fantastic.’

For a brief moment, Regina wondered if death would be so bad. Sweet oblivion meant that she no longer had to suffer living alongside the Charming’s—that was a big advantage—she would no longer have to watch Robin Hood and Maid Marian playing happy family—the latter would remain alive and she wouldn’t relapse as the Evil Queen—she wouldn’t have to live with the guilt of having driven Emma away or Henry’s sad brown eyes whenever he entered the mansion. Regina would die before she admitted to anyone that she missed the insufferable blonde.

The last time that Emma had been crying in front of her door, begging to be let in, Regina’s resolve almost crumbled. She couldn’t understand why Emma was so upset about the fact that Regina was ignoring her. Surely the blonde didn’t think they were ever friends? All that they had was the unfortunate fate of sharing a son.
Now, Emma was off doing who-knows-what. No one had even heard from her in a month’s time and magical beans didn’t grow on trees. They were even more rare than chicken teeth. Regina couldn’t help but have this nagging feeling in the bottom of her stomach that Emma was going to break her promise to Henry and leave Regina to deal with the repercussions. After all she deserved her son’s hate for taking the silent treatment for as far as she had.

‘Hey!’

The small, shrill voice startled everyone, including the cyclops. Daring to peak around the corner, David, Mary Margaret and Regina’s heads all popped out, one above the other in search of who was foolish enough to gain the one-eyed giant’s attention. All three their jaws nearly hit the pavement at what they saw.

In the middle of the street stood a small yellow creature, probably barely even reaching the height of half Regina’s lower leg. It appeared to be a feline of a sort, except for the fact that it was currently standing on its hind legs, its upper paws resting on it hips. It wore the biggest grin known to man, nearly splitting its face in half.

‘Pick on someone your own size!’

The trio blinked in unison, trying to convince themselves that they had somehow been knocked unconscious by the cyclops or quite possibly killed and they were imagining the creature in their last moments.

‘Huh?’ was the only sound that Regina managed to muster in her confused state.

At the very least, the cyclops began to turn, facing his small opponent with an equally confused look. Then he began to double over in laughter, falling to his knees and clutching his stomach. The one-eyed giant smashed his fist on the ground next to the feline, the small creature bouncing up and down at the force the beast exerted on the street.

‘You are Savior?’ Another laugh booming laugh that practically made all the windows—that wasn’t smashed yet—tremble. ‘Sheldon doesn’t see no mighty warrior! Sheldon could simply step on your puny body!’

Above and behind the feline a bright orange flame turned in a circular motion, spitting out a hooded figure. They landed with a thud on the ground and a groan escaped their lips. In a bit of a struggle, the figure flew to their feet, swiping at their cloak with their one hand as they tried to escape its clutches. After a moment the figure finally managed to yank their cloak aside, revealing the last person that anyone had thought it could be; Emma Swan.

The trio still hidden firmly behind the building gaped in absolute shock at the blonde heroine. She was in tight black leather pants, accompanied with leather boots. Her upper body was much more exposed, her breasts covered by what would qualify as bandages. Over it she wore a sleeveless, black waistcoat.

‘Happy, the hell did I tell you about jumping through before me?’ Emma was scowling firmly at the small creature as it continued to stare ahead at the cyclops. The woman’s cloak fluttered in front of her body and she released a growl of irritation, kicking and swiping at the material before simply yanking it off and tossing it to the ground. ‘Stupid clothes! Stupid—’ Emma tried to deliver a swift kick to it, but misjudged the force that would be require to use. She lost her balance and ended up crashing down on in the middle of the road.

Regina glanced back at the Charming’s, raising a questioning eyebrow, ‘Is this some kind of prank?
Because if it is, I don’t particularly find it amusing.’

David chuckled uncomfortably before shaking his head and blowing out a breath, ‘I wish it was.’

Emma released another growl and leapt to her feet, dusting off her clothing before placing her hands on her hips in a scolding manner.

‘That I was not allowed to,’ informed the small creature now known as “Happy”. ‘but you were slow.’

‘Oi!’

The cyclops blinked several times, shaking his head when he came to a conclusion. It began to rise to its feet, putting one foot in front of the other before he reached his full height. Emma barely seem affected by the way the ground shook underneath her feet..

‘This confusing to Sheldon. I smash you both!’

As the club ascended into the air, Regina realized one of two things:

One, the Savior was about to die an idiotic death.

And two, Emma was about to die an idiotic death.

All at once the three raced out into the street, ultimately stopping when they realized that they would never be able to reach them in time.

‘Emma!’

‘Regina, do something!’ Mary Margaret ordered, her head whipping to her former step-mother, eyes wide with panic.

‘I can’t!’ Regina spat, her voice shaking when she realized for the first time what it felt like to be utterly powerless. ‘I could end up doing much worse than having her squashed by an overgrown stick!’

Emma and the exceed simply watched as the monster began to bring its club downwards, heading straight to where they currently stood. Neither of them even moving so much as a muscle or even breathing for that matter. In a matter of seconds the club crashed down upon them.

‘No!’ Mary Margaret and David exclaimed at the same time.

A rumbling laugh escaped the monster’s gut as he clutched it in amusement, eye shining in mirth that the two of them had perished so easily. However, it’s victory was short lived when its club was suddenly pulled from his grip, causing him to stumble slightly.

Mary Margaret, David and Regina watched in utter shock as Emma raised the club above her head, having caught it the moment it had intended to pummel them into the ground. The blonde was now grinning ear to ear whilst the yellow exceed jumped up and down in excitement and pure pride, pumping its fists into the air.

‘Yeah! Go, Emma!’

The cyclops watched with an enormous frown etched on his forehead as Emma slowly began to move the club so she could now place her hands on at least a portion of the handle. He was more curious than anything that this small being had managed to catch his weapon let alone survive an
attack that caused the deaths of countless warriors. He was clearly unaware of the danger he was currently in, which meant he was blissfully ignorant to where Emma’s mind was going. Before the beast knew it, the Savior was bringing the club down on his foot.

For a moment it was utterly silent, the only sounds heard was the crackling of the fires around town and the trio’s intake of breath as they waited for the result. Then, at the top of his lungs, the beast hollered:

‘OUCHIE!’

Hopping on one leg, Sheldon gripped his foot as he tried to soothe the pain that was inflicted to his limb. In his wake he left imprints on the paved road, but the last thing anyone was concerned with now was the damage to the town’s infrastructure. That would be a cause for concern after they had defeated the creature.

Not allowing her grin to falter, Emma tossed the club aside and stared proudly at her handy work. It clearly filled her with pride, knowing that she had most likely just crushing the monster’s foot and would now gain the advantage of speed if she would need to run away from Sheldon.

‘Let’s go, little buddy!’ ordered Emma, bracing her entire body.

‘Aye, sir!’

The yellow creature suddenly sprouted a pair of pure white, feathery wings. He flew forwards and gripped Emma by her waistcoat before bursting into an inhuman speed, ascending into the air.

Shaking his head to force himself out of the stupor he found himself in, David finally returned to his senses and turned towards his wife and the mother of his grandson. They were currently gaping up at Emma and her small companion.

‘We need to help her!’ declared David, barely resisting the urge to shake both women. ‘Come on!’

Above in the air, Emma and Happy flew to eye-level with Sheldon as the beast continued to cradle his injured foot. Realizing the change of their position, Sheldon lowered is limb so that he was now standing on it. He remained oblivious to the three scrambling down on the ground, having gotten their hands on some rope. In fact, he did not even feel it when they began to tie it around his feet, preparing to bring the beast down.

The beast released a roar in fury, trying to swat the two of them out of the air. Every time, Asher moved out of the way, keeping himself and his friend floating in the air. Emma kept a close eye on her parents and Regina below, keeping the creature distracted for as long as they would need to get into position.

‘Oh, oh!’ exclaimed Happy excitedly in Emma’s ear. ‘Do the roar! Do the roar!’

‘You want me to roar?’ laughed Emma, eyes shining with mirth at his request.

‘Yeah!’

‘Okay, little buddy.’ The blonde moved her hands in one big circular motion, fire following the tips of her fingers. ‘I’m all fired up!’ Emma sucked at the air, drawing the bright red and orange colors into her nose and mouth, cupping her hands together. The blonde’s chest expanded and it seemed as if her belly shone a bright red color. Then she blew with all her might into her hands, sending an enormous blast of fire straight into the face of the beast.
Crack!

A deep hollow sound filled the air as the fire made contact with the cyclopses eye, triggering an enormous explosion and causing the one eyed giant to cry out in pure agony. Sheldon now permanently blinded, this granted the three on the ground the perfect opening.

‘Now!’ bellowed David, signaling the two women to begin pulling on their aside ropes.

The cyclops tried to take a step forward in order to regain his balance from the sudden attack. His legs tangled in the rope and Sheldon tripped, making a fast and hard forward descent to the ground. Asher was quick to fly them out of the way and to safety, just as the cyclops dropped onto his knees before bellyflopping on the tar. The sudden pressure to Sheldon’s stomach caused him to vomit the contents in his stomach, freeing a traumatized Dopey in a ball of slime.

The Charming’s and Regina gathered cautiously in front of the downed cyclops, not yet paying all too much attention to the shaking dwarf or Emma and Happy making celebratory sounds whilst they high-five one another.

Mary Margaret, David and Regina faced away from the fallen monster watching Emma and Happy laugh like they had just one the lottery. As soon as the two caught up with reality, they both sensed the tension in the air and utter confusion on the trio’s faces. Emma was the first to speak as Happy landed lazily on her head, his wings disappearing in a burst of glittering energy:

‘What?’

**Enchanted Forest—Past**

Emma landed on her behind with a loud thud and pain shot through her entire being. It was dull and it radiated through her bones like an unwelcome invasion of her body. She was still learning how to use the sword properly and lessons with dear ol’ dad had been more than a little challenging.

So, taking on several bandits all at once was not particularly advised. Especially when her werewolf godmother and warrior friend were busy with their own set of ruffians.

The savior barely had time to even pick herself off the ground before Ruby stepped in with a loud growl. The wolf placed herself between Emma and the men before she began to chase after them. Emma huffed in frustration and wiped her forehead from the sweat and blood that covered it. She watched as Ruby disappeared in the tree line after the last few bandits just as Mulan stepped in front of her with her hand stretched out.

They had been traveling for what felt like forever before they finally reached the South Provence. Mulan and Ruby seemed like their travels had only taken them an hour at the minimum whilst Emma looked like she crawled out from an overpass; hair more curly than ever and bags the size of grapes underneath her eyes.

Exhaustedly, Emma allowed Mulan to pull her off the ground before she began to dust off the dirt and mud that clung to her clothing. Perhaps a change of clothes were due, even if she would rather cut off a limb rather than take off her jacket.

Mulan glanced her friend over for signs of injury. When she found none she began to sheath her sword on her side. Emma followed her lead by reaching back and holding her scabbard just so that the sword would slide in quite easily. The frown that coated Emma’s features didn’t escape Mulan for even a moment.
‘What troubles you, Emma?’ Mulan questioned in concern. ‘You’ve been rather quiet all morning.’

The savior shrugged her shoulders and then proceeded to cross her arms over her chest. She glanced off into the woods, knowing that Ruby was going to at least be another ten minutes. The she-wolf enjoyed making a fool of her victims before she rendered them unconscious, so she was going to be chasing them until their armor weighed them down or they ran out of breath.

That meant Emma was stuck conversing with her friend until Ruby returned.

‘I just feel like I’m deadweight to the two of you,’ grumbled the blond. ‘We’ve been here for a week and a half, I can’t even catch a measly fish or catch a bunny, I can’t even hold my own against some bandits and I barely keep up with the two of you for a couple of minutes.’

The warrior’s gaze softened and Emma found it surprising that such a skilled fighter could be so compassionate.

‘Well don’t,’ insisted Mulan. ‘Ruby and I, we grew up in this world. My land was even more harsher than this one and far more dangerous. I had to learn to adapt at a very young age.’

Emma gave a glum nod, ‘Yeah, I saw the movie.’

Pausing for a moment, Mulan frowned in confusion before continuing, ‘You’re still learning and you’re willing to do so. What makes it that much better is that you’re adapting quite quickly. You’re not deadweight, Emma. You’re our friend.’

She wanted to argue, Emma truly did, but instead she found herself closing her large mouth and listening for once. Mulan had a way with words; she was a natural born leader. The warrior would have been a much better choice for a savior then her sorry a—

‘Hey, guys!’

Emma and Mulan’s heads whipped to where Ruby emerged from the tree line. Her teeth were bared in excitement, her canines shining proudly in the morning sun. In her gloved hands she carried what appeared to be an enormous egg. It was completely yellow with green flame-like shapes covering its shell. The egg was roughly the size of a human’s head—far bigger than anything the savior had seen before.

‘Look what I found!’

If she wanted to, Red Riding Hood would have skipped all the way to them, but Emma was certain she didn’t want either of them to make fun of her. Instead, she seemed to be vibrating as she neared them. She held the egg out like a child would to show their parents something new that they had found.

Emma tilted her head to the side in confusion as she examined the large item.

‘Breakfast?’

A gasp of horror came from Ruby as she clutched the egg as tightly as she could to her chest without cracking its shell. She turned slightly away from them so that she could keep it out of Emma’s reach. Emma had to raise an eyebrow at the glare she received from her best friend.

‘You do not eat these eggs, Swan!’ Ruby glanced down at the egg and her gaze softened. ‘It’s an exceed.’
The savior glanced between the she-wolf and the warrior, ‘A what now?’

‘An exceed,’ repeated Mulan as she took a step forward. She gently took the egg from Ruby’s grasp and began to inspect it carefully. ‘A feline with wings.’ Mulan held the egg out towards the sun and squinted her eyes. ‘They’re very loyal companions and have the potential to become master sorcerers.’

Emma scoffed at the absurdity of the sentence. ‘What?’ She joked. ‘Do they talk too?’

Ruby smirked smugly and crossed her arms over her chest, ‘Yes, Emma. They can, in fact, talk.’

‘What—’ Emma cut herself off when Mulan handed the egg over to her. She nearly dropped it and began to scramblid midair, but immediately brought it as close to her chest as she could before it hit the ground.

Slowly the savior moved it away from her body so that she could inspect the egg in her grasp. The sun shone at just the right angle so that they all could see the outline of the small creature growing inside.

Emma’s eyes widened and immediately her hands tightened on the large item. Something changed in her then and there. It was like she felt Henry’s first kick all over again. There was life growing inside the small shell—pure and innocent, helpless and defenseless.

Glancing up, she swallowed thickly to look at the other two women. Emma brought he egg closer to her chest once more and placed a protective arm around the shell.

‘What—’ she cleared her voice, ‘Why’s it out here all alone? Where’s its parents.’

Ruby pursed her lips, then glanced over to Mulan. They shared a strange look with one another, almost as if they were trying to decide if they should tell her or not.

Emma wanted to growl in anger. She hated it when Snow and David communicated that way. She always felt so left out.

‘No, come on,’ huffed Emma. ‘Tell me.’

Mulan turned to Emma and glanced down at the colorful shell in her grasp, then back up at Emma, ‘Exceeds abandon their young the moment that they lay their eggs. The babies need to learn to adapt to their environments or they...’ The warrior trailed off, unable to continue due to the sad look that her friend gained.

‘It’s an orphan?’ Emma questioned, holding out the egg once more. She frowned slightly at it and found her heart aching for the small creature. Coming to a decision, she glanced up towards Ruby, ‘Can we keep it?’

She felt like that small little orphan girl again—finding a stray puppy and dragging it all the way to wherever she was staying. Emma would hold up the creature—cat or dog—and her eyes would be wide as she pleaded her foster parent to allow her to keep the small animal.

They never did.

Sensing this strange, indecipherable turmoil in her friend, Ruby offered a small awkward laugh. She was surprised when it went completely over her head and Emma’s pleading eyes only grew in size.

‘Uhm, sure,’ chuckled Ruby. Then, with the sternest voice she could muster, she stared, ‘So long as
you feed it and take it for walks.’

Emma didn’t even answer. A smile only etched onto her face with one promise on her mind.

She would never abandon this small creature. She would be there for it, no matter the challenges.
I can not express in words how happy the kudos, hits and comments make me. Let’s not forget the bookmarks as well.

Couple of things:

I just realized that there are time zones in the world. Gasp! So, Mondays and Thursdays for me might not be the same for you guys. So, cause I’m really, really lazy. I’ll let you guys work it out from Cape Town South Africa time.

Next, I see there’s a lot of comments about this being a Fairytail crossover. Whilst that is an awesome idea—yes I have watched it because I am awesome—this is not entirely that. I did get my inspiration for Happy there, but this one the little guy is a little smarter and much more powerful.

Also, a happy previous birthday for Cshields. *Waves*

Sorry that I’m a little late, but I hope you had a great day. As an extra gift I want to give a shout out to your Metamorphosis Of An Unsuspecting Dragon with RegalQuill. I have yet to read it, but I want to encourage everyone else to do so.

Anyways, I’ve opened my big mouth for long enough.

‘Mom!’

Emma had never imagined she would be a mom to the little boy she had given up thirteen years ago. Back then, in that quaint little jail cell, she couldn’t have allowed herself to get attached to the small bean growing in her body. She couldn’t feel the joy of feeling the baby kick for the first time or in fact even enjoy any part of the miracle growing inside her tummy. When she had forced herself to give Henry away it had been the hardest thing that she ever could have done.

During the time Emma had been away, she had found herself with a lot of silence and loneliness to think about not only herself but everything else as well. It wasn’t a mistake to have left, since she had found her small companion, Happy, and she loved him to death, but she regretted the amount of time she had lost with her family and the amount of time she had forced herself to stay away in order to fix something that wasn’t broken.

In one swift movement both Regina and Emma rose to their feet at the sound of their son’s voice. The latter misjudged her strength and nearly caused the table that they were all sitting at to topple over. Mary Margaret gasped in shock at her daughter’s brute strength as Emma’s chair sunk into the floor.

Whilst everyone else seemed to be focused on the damages that the blonde was causing to the establishment, she seemed oblivious to it all as she maneuvered herself away from the table. Henry froze in his stride as some of the Merry men entered the diner along with Robin Hood, Marian and Roland.
Regina glanced sideways at Emma before making her way to Henry. The blonde hung back awkwardly, waiting for the brunette to check on their son if he was alright after the day’s events. The cleanup of the monster might have been dealt with, but they had no idea what condition the boy was in, especially when the injured count was so high and the hospitals practically filled up.

‘Ih hah hih?’ Came Happy’s incoherent mumbling around the haddock he was feasting on, staring up at Emma from the seat on top of the booth.

Emma’s eyes never left the boy as she replied effortlessly, ‘Don’t talk with your mouth full.’

The exceed swallowed thickly, turning his gaze over to Henry. Happy locked eyes with the brunet, barely paying attention to his mother’s worried questions, nodding along to whatever it was that she was asking.

‘Is that him?’ repeated Happy, his green eyes sparkling curiously.

‘Yeah, little buddy. That’s my kid.’

Mary Margaret and David shared a look with one another, finding both their reactions quite odd. After all, it had only been a month since they had last seen their daughter but it seemed as if she had somehow lost several years. However, Emma seemed somehow lighter and extremely different.

‘You know Henry,’ Mary Margaret tentatively pointed out, looking up at the feline perched on the booth, above David’s head.

Happy nodded his head enthusiastically, turning to look over at the pixie haired woman. The feline smiled broadly, ‘Emma has told me all about you guys! About the curse and the weird things in this world like hot cocoa with cinnamon. She said it’s even better than fish.’

David released an amused chuckle, tilting his head backwards to look at Happy, ‘We can order you some cocoa if you would like?’

‘Oh! Oh!’ Happy bounced up and down excitedly, turning towards Emma. ‘Can I? Can I? Can I?’

Emma turned towards her small companion, laughing at the pleading look on his face. The Savior shook her head adamantly, ‘No way. You’ll keep me up all night.’

No matter how much Emma loved her sugary drinks, she had once made the mistake of giving the small feline chocolate before they went to bed. She swore that the sugar rush that he had afterwards, if he were to be put in a hamster wheel, could power New York City for an entire year.

Happy pouted but knew better than to question what his pseudo parent had said. Not to mention, he didn’t want to keep Emma up any more than she needed to be. The feline knew how tired she must be after the amount of magical energy that she had used that day. Opening magical portals were never a walk on the beach.

Just as Regina seemed to be wrapping up her talk with Henry, checking for injuries, giving him his usual psychological evaluation, the boy sidestepped his mother and bolted towards Emma, leaping towards her and throwing his arms around her neck. Emma caught her son effortlessly, barely even moving an inch even from the force the boy exerted on her.

By now Regina had rejoined them at the table, a sad smile on her lips as she watched mother and son embrace one another for the first time in a month.

‘Ma! You’re back!’ Henry gasped out, finally pulling away and slipping down onto the floor. ‘I
thought you weren’t gonna be here until my birthday?"

Emma grinned broadly, canines shining in the diner’s lighting as she placed her hands on her hips. ‘Consider this an extra, early birthday present. I missed you so much I couldn’t stay away for another minute let alone another week.’

All three settled back down at the table, all as one big family and ready to catch up with a much needed celebratory family dinner. Mary Margaret, David and baby Neal. Regina and Henry, and now Emma and Happy. It was as if these past month hadn’t happened and this was completely normal. Even with the new, yet pleasant addition.

‘Kid, I wanna introduce you to someone,’ informed Emma, glancing over to her travel companion. ‘This is Happy. Ruby found his egg while we were traveling—hatched him myself. He’s been keeping me company ever since Ruby and I went our separate ways.’

‘Hi!’ greeted Happy, waving his hand excitedly. ‘Emma’s told me a lot about you. It’s great to finally meet you.’

Henry chuckled at the small creature’s enthusiasm, ‘Thanks, I guess. I’m Henry.’

The exceed’s smile only broadened. Though after a moment, his expression became extremely serious as he turned towards Emma. ‘I want another fish please.’

It had only been Emma and Happy for a while now. She had gotten used to only taking care of herself and her companion in that time. This felt like a big change for her even if it was what she had dreamed of for many of nights. Whilst it was pleasant, it was a little overwhelming too.

Henry was the most common source of conversation, catching up in anything that she had missed in the time that she had been gone. Ranging from schoolwork to a book that he had begun to read. Every now and then Mary Margaret would provide her input, dividing her attention between the conversation and feeding baby Neal. David and Regina remained silent as did Emma.

The Savior was content on just listening, having missed the sound of her son’s voice. She also didn’t yet want to talk about her time spent away, even if she knew that the curious glances sent her way from both David and Regina would one day need to be answered. Though, that would not be today.

‘—came out of nowhere! And the wall stretches all around the town. It’s impossible to leave.’

Emma didn’t know why but she was fairly certain that Henry should not be this excited about an ice wall boxing everyone in like sardines in a can. No one could previously leave the town and it irked the blonde as to why this unknown magic user would want to go through the trouble of creating the wall.

‘Well, since I’m back, Dad and I could check on it tomorrow?’ offered Emma, turning towards her father with a hopeful expression. ‘That is if I’m still Sheriff around these parts?’

David jumped at the chance—almost quite literally, ‘Yes, of course. After all I was just keeping the badge warm for you.’

The blonde smiled warmly, taking another bite from her grilled cheese, savoring the salty taste in her mouth. Emma couldn’t remember the last time she had one of Granny’s orgasmic sandwiches. Definitely far too long if she could only remember that the taste was wonderful and unable to remember the actual taste itself.

‘So, Ma,’ began Henry, practically vibrating in excitement. ‘How was your trip? What did you do?
Did you fight a lot of monsters? I heard you took the cyclops out all by yourself. Is that true? Where did you learn to—'

‘Henry,’ reprimanded Regina gently, placing a hand on his arm to still his movements, ‘One question at a time, darling.’

A blush coated the brunet’s cheeks as he turned to smile sheepishly at his mother. ‘Sorry, Mom,’ turning to Emma, he added, ‘Sorry, Ma. I just missed you, is all.’

Emma nodded her head in agreement, reaching across the table to take hold of Henry’s hand. She squeezed it firmly, taking great joy in it when he returned the gesture.

‘I missed you too, kid,’ agreed the blonde. ‘However, I’m not leaving anytime soon. This is my home and I’ve been away long enough as it is. We don’t need to rush anything because you think I might just vanish into thin air again.’

Henry smiled brightly, nodding his head, ‘Yeah, okay.’

‘Besides, a lot has happened and I’m not yet ready to talk about most of it. It’s a little overwhelming and you might not understand what I will tell you,’ Emma paused, faltering for a moment. ‘But I will tell you. Everything. I swear. However, I just got home and I’d like to be here for a little more than just to clean up cyclops slime and book Dopey therapy sessions with Archie.’

‘The midget will need more than therapy from Archie, if you asked me,’ scoffed Regina.

That at least drew a laugh from some of the occupants around the table. Regina, however, remained deathly silent. That made Emma only more nervous in her presence than she already had been.

‘Take all the time you need, Em,’ reassured Mary Margaret, smiling softly at her daughter as she clutched onto Neal’s waving hand. ‘We’re all just glad that you’re back.’ The pixie haired woman turned to face her former step-mother. ‘Right, Regina?’

‘Ecstatic.’

Henry’s elbow collided with Regina’s ribs and it took all of Emma’s willpower not to burst into laughter. Regina might still have a stick up her ass, but Emma was surely over it.

At least, she hope that she was.

‘Well, it’s been a lovely evening,’ began Emma rising to her feet. Moving her hand in a horizontal, circular motion, a portal suddenly opened up in the floor and up shot the travel pack that she had packed the first time she had left town. Effortlessly she caught it and began to strap it to her back. ‘But both Happy and I need to get some rest if we’re going to be returning to work tomorrow.’

Wordlessly her companion sprouted his wings, floating over to Emma and landing on her shoulder, eyes drooping with exhaustion. The small creature yawned and leaned against the side of Emma’s head, wrapping it’s tail around her neck.

‘Mom, Dad, I’ll see you both at home,’ Emma nodded her head at her parents, briefly making a silly face at her baby brother. When the baby gurgled happily, she turned to her son and his mother, ‘Kid, I’ll see you tomorrow. G’night, Regina.’

‘The keys are under the—’

‘Doorstep. Yes, thank you, ma.’
Henry grinned broadly as he barreled into her side. ‘Night, ma! Love you!’

‘Love you too, kid.’ Emma smiled and hugged the boy closer to her chest.

Emma had barely even made it out the door before all three Charming’s turned towards Regina. The brunette swore that even baby Neal was narrowing his eyes at her. Regina nearly scoffed at the almost reprimanding looks being sent her way. It didn’t take a genius to know what they wanted. She hadn’t said so much as a word to Emma all night, starting off this entire welcoming like the cause of the goodbye.

In the time that the blonde had been gone, Regina thought she had come close to admitting to herself that she had missed Emma’s constant company. Henry had obviously missed Emma’s presence and had all but sulked for the entire month. Sometimes he refused to eat and some nights he woke screaming from nightmares of a fate worse than death that had fallen upon the blonde Sheriff.

‘Don’t look at me like that,’ scowled Regina before growling and getting to her feet in anger.

Not a minute had gone by that Regina hadn’t thought of Emma, What if’s floating around her mind and worry gripping her heart that something happened to the blonde bimbo. Sometimes she found herself considering going after Emma, but she wouldn’t have known where to search to begin with. Not to mention, Henry couldn’t have two parents leaving him behind. It was bad enough Regina had been the one to drive her off in the first place.

The Savior and her exceed had barely even made it to the white picket gate when Regina exited the diner behind them, the sound of the door opening attracting the laughing duo’s attention. Emma seemed to freeze on the spot, but her face never portraying a single emotion.

‘Regina,’ acknowledged the blonde, glancing briefly at Happy to silently instruct him to keep quiet. ‘Did, um, you want something?’

‘As a matter of a fact, yes,’ nodded the sorceress, crossing her arms over her chest.

It was a wall, and Regina was very aware that Emma knew it. The queen hated it when the daughter of Snow White and Prince Charming could read her like a book. She supposed it was because they were so similar even when they were so different. It made Regina sick to even think about it.

‘Why did you leave?’

For a moment, Emma seemed caught of guard by the question, clearly not having been expecting it. She pursed her lips uncomfortably, her hands reaching up to grip onto the straps of her travel pack.

‘It’s complicated.’

‘Then simplify it for me,’ spat Regina, her famous temper showing in the form of a vein throbbing on her forehead. ‘You left your parents, you left Henry, you left—’ catching herself, Regina swallowed thickly. ‘You left them for over a month and now you just pop back here, expecting everything to return to normal.’

‘Hey,’ snapped Emma, baring her canines at the brunette. ‘You don’t get to be self-righteous. You don’t get to judge me. You ignored me for over two months. You shut me out.’ The blonde’s nostrils flared angrily and she clenched her fists. ‘What did you think would happen? Jesus Christ, Regina. We share a kid. How do you think your bullshit affected him?’

‘You ruined my life! You can hardly blame me for—’
‘I can blame you,’ informed Emma, smiling tensely. ‘And I am blaming you.’

The blonde could feel Happy tensing on her shoulder, worry overcoming his small body. She didn’t want to fight in front of him, but this conversation needed to happen and clearly it was happening now.

‘I didn’t even know you were dating the forest boy. Why the hell would I intentionally hurt you, huh? I did the right thing and you gave me crap for it for two whole months. It is not my fault that some random woman I saved happens to be your boyfriend’s wife and it is not my fault that Robin chose Marian. Get that through your thick skull.’

At the last harsh sentence that spilled from Emma’s mouth, Regina noticed the way Happy’s ears pulled in discomfort, tears filling his eyes. It occurred to her that this small creature was not just a companion to Emma, but she was raising it as well. Happy could quite possibly see Emma as some sort of a parent. No child liked it when a parent was upset or angry.

For the first time, Regina actually heard the words that the blonde was saying. If she could, she would have kicked herself for taking three months to listen to Emma’s side of the story. She could see the anger radiating off the Savior, but in her eyes she could see the hurt and pain that she had caused. However, somehow it seemed duller, like it was an old wound that hasn’t yet fully healed in a few months.

‘Emma—Emma, I’m—I’m sorry. I—I—’

‘Whatever,’ the Savior waved her off, looking away and wiping her nose. Green connected with brown once more and Emma shrugged her shoulders. ‘I’m over it. I’ve had...’ trailing off, it looked like the blonde was searching for the right words. ‘I’ve had some time to think about everything.’

‘Emma—’

‘No, Regina, it’s fine. Really,’ insisted Emma, pursing her lips. ‘I’m going to go. I’m tired and I need some sleep. We’ll forget about the past and just try to move on. Maybe we’ll salvage some form of a friendship in the future, okay? However, right now, I’m close to passing out and I really don’t want to deal with your bullshit tonight.’

The blonde turned and just like that she walked off into the night, doing the exact same thing that Regina had three months ago. However, this time, it was Regina who suddenly found an aching so severe in her chest that she nearly gasped at its intensity.

**Storybrooke—Past**

Something was wrong.

Regina could sense it, feel it in her bones.

It wasn’t Emma’s ridiculous bug that dropped Henry off that evening. No, the horrid sound of the car was replaced by David’s truck’s engine, and he was rude enough to park skew in front of her house. Emma always parked parallel or in her driveway, but as of late she had begun to park behind the hedges.

At first, irritation filled her entire being. It momentarily overwhelmed her rationality and the logical part of her mind telling her that she should go outside and ask David where Emma was, but instead she immediately reached for her cellphone on one of the end tables.

Dialing Emma’s number, she brought the item to her ear, already preparing the rant in her mind that
the woman didn’t even have the backbone anymore to drop off her own son.

That’s when it happened.

Voicemail.

*Hi, you’ve reached Emma.*

*If this is Dad: I left a spare key of the loft inside my desk if you manage to misplace yours.*

*If this is Mom: Anything for dinner sounds awesome, I will literally eat anything.*

*If this is Henry: Sure, kid. The answer is probably yes. Just don’t tell your mother.*

*If this is Regina: I’ll be at your front door as soon as I’m done with whatever it is I’m doing. I miss you, and yes, I’m aware that this is pathetic.*

*If this is anyone else: Call David. He is the one covering the phones today... every day.*

An uneasy feeling settled onto Regina’s stomach. She couldn’t place her finger on it because nothing came to mind. However, her intuition was telling her that perhaps this silent treatment that she had been giving the blonde had finally gone too far.

At first it had started because of Emma being the reason why she and Robin were forced apart. Then, it was because she thought that Emma and Hook were together. Before Regina knew it, it had simply gone too far for her to be able to turn back.

The door to the mansion slammed open with a loud thud that made Regina jump with a fright, and it closed the exact same way. The next sound that entered her ears was Henry’s feet stomping up the stairs; completely ignoring the No Running Rule as per usual. However, he then proceeded to slam his own bedroom door.

Once more Regina dialed Emma’s number and pressed her cellphone to her ear.

Voice Mail.

*Hi, you’ve reached—*

The sorceress wanted to scoff, but her anger was slowly beginning to evaporate. Then, with mild hesitation, she tucked her cellphone into her pantsuit’s pocket. Regina moved away from the window and began to make her way towards Henry’s room down the hall.

Regina knocked on the door to signal her presence, but she didn’t receive an answer in the form of words. Her son merely grunted to give his consent to enter his room. To her expectation, Henry was lying on his bed with his head tucked into a pillow. It looked like he had flopped down dramatically onto the furniture in a starfish formation and that he was now adamant on staying in the position for the rest of the evening.

‘Henry?’ She kept her voice soft in order not to startle her son. ‘Henry, what’s the matter?’ She took a seat down on the bed and placed a tender hand between the boy’s shoulder blades.

Henry turned his head from within his pillow so that he could face his mother. The teenager’s eyes were rimmed red and tears were still streaming down his cheeks as he lay their. Henry sniffled softly and reached up to wipe his nose.

‘She’s gone,’ admitted Henry, staring up at his mother as though his entire world had just suddenly
caved in. ‘She left with Ruby today, to the Enchanted Forest, so that she could "Clear her head".’

It felt as though someone had just reached into her chest and torn her heart out, then crushed it as she stood helplessly and watched them do it.

‘What do you mean, Henry?’ For the first time in what could be decades, the queen’s voice quivered. ‘Who left with Miss Lucas?’

Henry glanced away, slightly off into space. The boy was trying to get his own thoughts and feelings in order, trying to keep himself from bawling like his ten-year-old self would have. Then he answered, ‘Emma. She and Ruby left through a portal this morning. I spent the whole day with Gramps and Grandma.’ The boy looked towards his mother. ‘We had been doing a lot of emotional eating.’

The sorceress didn’t register her son’s guilty admission. She was far too invested on the fact that Emma had left without even giving her as so much as a goodbye.

The second to last sentence of Emma’s voicemail replayed in her mind.

*If this is Regina: I’ll be at your front door as soon as I’m done with whatever it is I’m doing. I miss you, and yes, I’m aware that this is pathetic.*
Maybe We Can Nope Out Of This Situation

Chapter Notes

Another day, another chapter!

Happy New Year, guys.

This fic is turning out better than I had hoped and I feel really, really, really confident about this story. I’m having a lot of fun writing it and all these kudos, bookmarks and comments are motivating me even more so.

Just a small note:

There’s going to be a lot of twists and turns in this fic, so if something doesn’t make sense don’t worry it will eventually.

On to the fic!

‘When you said she was funny—’

‘Happy—’

‘And smart—’

‘Little buddy—’

‘And beautiful—’

‘Exceed, I’m warning you—’

‘You forgot to mention the part where she was a fire-breathing serpent with beady brown eyes that tear into your body and strips you from your soul.’

A sigh escaped Emma’s lip as she set down the pan she was using to make pancakes on the stove. Next to her workplace was already an enormous stack, sizzling hot and still steaming. In the time that Emma had been away, her appetite had grown due to her magic abilities. She needed to eat more if she wanted to get through the day because her powers burnt through a lot of energy.

Happy had been extremely upset when they had returned home that evening. The small feline hated it when Emma got angry, not because he was afraid of her, but because he knew how much she herself hated it whenever she lost her temper. Emma was no longer the same person that she was when she had left Storybrooke and her magic was much stronger. If she lost her temper, there could be dire consequences.

‘Actually,’ began Emma, turning around to lean back against the counter. ‘She steals hearts, not souls. There’s a bit of a difference.’

Green eyes widened in shock and perhaps even horror as Happy leapt up to stand on his chair, gesturing his hands wildly.
‘How is that any better?!’

A chuckle rumbled in Emma’s chest, shaking her head in amusement. Happy always had that dramatic flare and large mouth that would get him into so deep trouble. If he were to be this upfront with Regina, she was surely going to roast the little fur-ball.

And even if it would be amusing to see that, Emma loved Happy and enjoyed his companionship. She didn’t want the small creature to die because of his own stupidity. They had already been through so much that Emma didn’t think she could handle her transition back into Storybrooke without Happy. He had been her small, but firm rock in her time of need and more than once he had been the one to yank her back onto the edge when she wanted to tip over, even when he didn’t realize it.

‘Listen, Happy,’ began Emma, flipping off the stove as she made her way to the kitchen table and leaned heavily against it. ‘It’s complicated. It always has been. Me and Regina—’

‘Regina and I.’

‘What?’

‘You said “me and Regina” it’s “Regina and—’

‘Regina and I,’ gritted out Emma through bared teeth. ‘We’re like dogs and cats. We always have been. When I first came to Storybrooke—well, we did not mix. Then when it got better, I accidentally split her and her boyfriend up. I didn’t mean to, but I hurt her.’

Happy tilted his head to the side, slowly sitting down in his chair again, ‘But you said she hurt you too?’

Emma nodded her head in agreement, a sad smile reaching her lips, ‘She did, little buddy. All we’ve ever done is hurt each other. So, it’s better if we both just stay away from one another.’

A mischievous smile began to form on Happy’s face, causing Emma to raise a curious eyebrow. She knew that look all too well, yet she never knew what to expect from it. An almost satisfied purr escaped Happy as he brought his paws up to his cheeks.

‘You llllike her.’

‘What?’

‘You want to kissss her!’

‘Happy!’

‘Emma and Regina, sitting in a tree. K—I—S—I—N—G!’

‘Where did you even learn that song, you little shit?!’

Emma dove over the counter to wrap her hands around Happy’s neck, but the small feline sprouted its wings and flew into the air. Instead of grabbing onto her intended target, Emma caused several of the pots and pans, and other various items to go flying off the kitchen counter.

**Crash!**

At the sound of the deafening ruckus, Mary Margaret and David came rushing out of their bedroom, baby Neal perched in his mother’s arms whilst David held his sword out in front of him, ready to cut
down the attacker. However, the stopped dead in their tracks as they watched Emma scrambling to get up off the chair she had completely mangled and Happy landing on top of the kitchen counter, laughing at the blonde.

‘What on earth—’

Both Emma and Happy turned their attention to Mary Margaret, pointing accusingly at one another as children would do when they were caught doing something that they shouldn’t have been.

‘HE/SHE STARTED IT!’

Breakfast wasn’t unpleasant for the Charming’s. It felt natural as they slipped back into routine, even if it was mixed up a little bit.

Emma and Happy practically inhaled their food, not even stopping whenever Mary Margaret practically begged them to slow down, afraid that they would choke.

Mary Margaret and David moved around one another with stride, eating whilst they tended to the baby as well.

It had always fascinated Emma whenever she watched her parents interact. They were so in synced, seemingly knowing what the other wanted to do before they did it and what baby Neal wanted before he even did.

For a while it had stung and jealous was a heavy emotion that weighed on Emma, but she didn’t feel left out. Sure most of their attention was being given to the baby, but Emma was still constantly checked on.

And sometimes she wished that they would give all their attention to the baby.

Seriously.

They were helicopter parents before it even was a thing.

They’re faces were right next to the definition of the word.

‘So, Em, what’s on the—Oh, my God! At the very least, please, chew your food!’

A sheepish smile graced the woman’s lips, gulping down the whole pancake she had shoved into her mouth. ‘Sorry, Ma,’ offered Emma, a blush tainting her cheeks. ‘I’m just starving.’

‘Well, the food isn’t going anywhere,’ reassured Mary Margaret with a small smile, reaching across the table to pat her daughter’s arm. ‘I wanted to ask what you had planned for the day?’

‘Oh,’ Emma shrugged her shoulders, turning to look at her father. ‘Like I said last night, I want to see this ice wall for myself. If I’m going to be Sheriff again, I need to get back into it. Maybe that is the best place to start?’

David nodded his head in agreement, ‘I think it’s a wonderful idea.’ Turning to Happy, the blond smiled politely, ‘Will you be joining us, Happy?’

The yellow creature nodded his head up and down, gulping down his own food.

‘Emma and I are a team. We don’t go anywhere without each other.’ Happy turned towards Emma, tilting his head questioningly, ‘Right, Emma?’
‘Right, little buddy.’

Emma didn’t miss the way her mother and father smiled at one another, no doubt thankful for the friendship that she shared with Happy.

She knew that they hadn’t wanted her to be alone and even if she had went her separate ways from Red, at least there was someone that had been keeping her company.

‘We would like to hear all about your adventures in the Enchanted Forest,’ Mary Margaret pointed out, lifting her mug of hot cocoa to her lips. ‘I’m sure that you both have plenty of stories to tell us.’

‘Do we ever!’ Happy giggled excitedly before opening his mouth to start retelling some of their tales. ‘We—’

‘Happy,’ reprimanded Emma gently, pushing her plate aside as she gave the feline a warning look.

The yellow ball of fur meant no harm, but he couldn’t possibly understand any of it. To her family Emma had only been gone a month. To her—them, it had been much longer than that and she didn’t want to cause her family any pain when they realized that they had lost even more time with her.

It wasn’t their fault, but they were definitely going to see it that way.

‘It’s a little complicated,’ began Emma anew, glancing nervously at her parents. ‘A lot has happened in the time I was away.’

‘We can see that,’ agreed David, chuckling slightly. ‘I see you had found someone to help you control your magic to its full capabilities. We couldn’t be prouder, Emma.’

Worrying her lip, Emma felt the guilt beginning to way down on her chest. She didn’t want to lie to her parents, they were Snow White and Prince Charming, the most pure hearted people she knew. They were heroes and she didn’t want to let them down by keeping anything from them.

‘Not—Not exactly,’ The blonde barely met their eyes, even pushing her own cup towards Happy.

The yellow ball of fur was all too eager to accept the beverage, beginning to chug down the hot liquid. Emma was going to regret the sugar rush he will no doubt have, but she needed to talk with her parents.

‘There’s something I need to tell you.’

Mary Margaret and David both tensed, but they remained silent as they patiently waited for Emma to continue. Emma could see the fear of the unknown in their eyes, no doubt worried that she was going to announce she wanted to leave again sooner or later.

‘I wasn’t just gone for a month,’ informed Emmett, pursing her lips. ‘I’ve been gone for three years.’

As if on cue, Neal gave a loud wail, portraying the same emotions that was written all over her parents’ faces. Mary Margaret was quick to pick up the crying baby, going on autopilot as she rocked her baby, eyes never leaving Emma’s face. David placed his hand on Mary Margaret’s shoulder, more to steady himself than to comfort her.

‘Three—Three years. Three years? How is that possible, Emma?’

The blonde shrugged her shoulders nervously at her father, scratching her neck uncomfortably.

‘Time portals, I guess. I’ve been—I’ve been training and stuff... with magic users. It’s all a lot to tell
and a lot to take in. I think it’ll be easier if I drop one bombshell at a time.’

‘You did seem so different... You still seem so different.’ Mary Margaret tried to take a breath pinching the bridge of her nose. ‘Where did you go? Why did you go? Three years is so long, sweetheart.’

‘I know,’ sighed Emma, refusing to get emotional. ‘I’m sorry, I didn’t intend to stay away so long, but there were other things at stake and in time I will tell you all about it. I just want you to process one thing at a time, because you look like you’re both going to explode.’

‘Well, can you blame us?’ chuckled David half-heartedly. ‘You just told us that you haven’t seen us in three years. I can’t imagine what that must be like.’

‘It’s weird,’ supplied Emma, smiling despite herself. ‘Though, I wouldn’t change a thing. How else would I have Happy?’

The feline perked up at the mention of his name. Moving away from the cup, his yellow fur was stained with the brown liquid, causing the family to laugh.

‘Aw,’ cooed Happy. ‘You do care, you big softy!’

Emma scowled at her companion, contemplating knocking him off the table. Instead, she settled for a low grumble, ‘Shut it, Happy.’

* 

Motion sickness.

Motion sickness is sometimes referred to as sea sickness or car sickness. The symptoms of motion sickness are nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sweating, and a sense of feeling unwell.

That was how Happy loved to constantly diagnose Emma whenever she felt like her stomach was about to climb out of her body and beat her with a baseball bat. It was the side affect of the magic that Emma now possessed and there was absolutely nothing she could do about it.

Cars were definitely her enemy now. Carriages too. Practically any form of transportation that wasn’t alive.

What the hell that was about, Emma had no idea.

Currently, as David drove down the road towards the town line, the enormous ice wall approaching simply not as fast as Emma would have liked and was praying for, Emma was staring out the window and regretting ever getting into the cruiser. She had thought that it would be fine, seeing how her father could talk non-stop and that he would take her mind off of the moving vehicle.

She’d been so very wrong. Talking made it so much worse.

‘Hey, Emma, are you alright?’ David’s voice was filled with concern and Emma could really blame him. ‘You seem a little pale.’

‘Don’t worry about her,’ reassured Happy, looking at David in the rearview mirror. ‘She has motion sickness. It’s a side effect from the extent of her magical abilities. She’ll be fine in a moment.’

‘You seem to know a lot about her, Happy. You’re very close to my daughter, aren’t you?’

‘Oh, yeah,’ nodded Happy enthusiastically. ‘She found me when I was just an egg and my parents abandoned me in the Southern Isles. Emma raised me, fed me, taught me how to read and write.’
A fond smile graced Emma’s lips despite the tempting thought of throwing herself from the vehicle. She remembered around three years ago, the yellow with green flame-like shapes covering its shell, roughly the size of her head. Ruby had later confessed how it had fallen out of a tree and she was the lucky dolt who was struck by it. By the time that Happy had finally come into the world in all his furry glory she had strayed from her path with Ruby, only meeting up with one another when Emma had returned to their time and sent for her by pigeon. When Happy had hatched, she wasn’t so alone anymore and her travels was filled with constant companionship. The more she trained and the stronger she became, the more Happy did as well. They were there for one another through thick and thin. Whilst Emma saw hundreds of centuries pass, kingdoms rise and fall all in the span of three years, Happy was the one thing that helped her remain grounded to reality. By the time that the police cruiser finally came to a step, several feet from the ice wall itself, Emma practically jumped out of the car and began to administer kisses to the tar road. Happy was all but giggling at her even if he tried to muffle the sounds with his paws whilst David just watched on with concern, worry clear in his eyes. ‘Thank the gods and Regina for making Storybrooke so small!’ declared Emma in relief before making her way back onto her feet. ‘I don’t know what I would have done if this place was anything like Boston or New York.’ ‘Well, can’t you use a spell to help you with this problem?’ Happy shook his head adamantly, ‘No, she can't. It doesn’t work on her because—’ ‘Little buddy, why don’t you go ahead and scope out the area, hmm? See if you find anything suspicious?’ The yellow feline saluted Emma as he sprouted his wings. ‘Aye, sir!’ exclaimed Happy, bursting into the air to carry out the woman’s orders. ‘What’s with the “Aye, sir”?’ questioned David, chuckling in amusement as he watched the exceed disappearing in the distance. ‘Where did he pick that up?’ Shrugging her shoulders, Emma turned towards her father as she placed her hands on her hips, pushing back her waistcoat to reveal her bare torso save for the material wrapped around her breasts. She didn’t even seem to shiver given the fact that she was underdressed for the cold Maine winter air. In fact she didn’t even seem bother by it at all. ‘We were sailing on the seas for a couple of months,’ explained Emma. She thought back to the time she had spent at the helm, a ship she had commandeered for the hell of it with a crew that was more than eager enough to follow a child with the mouth of a sailor and the heart of a natural born leader that promised gold and other treasures beyond their wild imagination. Since it hadn’t been her time that she had been fooling around in, she might as well enjoyed it.
'He picked it up from the men in the crew. Hell, I think that sentence was his very first.'

The open air, the beautiful horizon, the pirate’s life, it was all fun while it lasted.

Mind you, this was before Emma reached the potential that she had now. When transportation wasn’t such an issue.

Now, if she thought about spending months on end aboard a ship that swayed form left to right... to left... to... right...

Emma gagged, placing her hand over her mouth as her breakfast made a U-turn in her stomach. She turned around and sprinted towards the tree line where she emptied her stomach behind the closest trunk.

Fuck.

David was no doubt concerned for her wellbeing, but she didn’t pay him much mind as she tried to focus on her feet grounding her to the earth.

It was ridiculous how a powerful magic user such as herself get bested by something as feeble as methods of transportation.

‘Classy, Miss Swan.’

A car door slammed alongside the familiar snarky voice and a set of car keys jingled to attention as they were no doubt pocketed by their owner.

Oh, no.

‘I see that your breakfast hasn’t particularly agreed with you this morning. Would you like some water to wash it down and a warm beanbag to help you settle your upset tummy?’

No, no. No.

‘Or could we quite possibly return to the task at hand so that you may waste our time by some other method; inspecting an ice wall that your father and I have already gone over at least a dozen times since it has shown up last week.’

‘Jeez, Regina. Who took a piss in your coffee this morning?’ snarked Emma, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand.

Just what Emma needed right now.

She just lost the only meal she had put into her stomach and would soon be hungry ten times over and she smelled like puke.

Now Regina was going to give her a hard time as well and Emma was going to lose her temper and end up burning down half of Storybrooke.

This was turning out to be a great start to her morning already.

‘What are you doing here? The sun is up.’

Regina narrowed her eyes at the smirking Charming, but before she could retaliate or quite possibly set her on fire, which Emma wouldn’t actually mind, David jumped in between effectively changing the subject.
‘I asked her to join us,’ explained the deputy. ‘She might be able to help if we find something.’

‘Well, she’s not the only walking Encyclopedia of magic around here anymore, Dad,’ huffed Emma, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘It would have been nice if I had been given a heads up.’

‘Yes, I would also have appreciated a heads up before you took off for an entire month, and yet here we are.’

‘Oh, here we go again. You know what—’

‘Emma!’ interrupted Happy, calling out to his companion. ‘I found some kind of cave thingy in the ice. I think we should check it out. It seems like someone’s been in there.’

The exceed floated over until he landed in front of the trio, a look of determination on his face.

‘Maybe whoever created this wall has been living here.’

The blonde grinned toothily at Happy, pride shining in her eyes as she stared down at the feline.

‘Good job, little buddy.’

Turning back to her father and Regina, she tilted her head over to the ice wall.

‘We’ll check it out. You two can bicker or whatever.’

Emma didn’t wait for them to answer and only heard Regina huffing as the blonde walked off with Happy.

The radio crackled in the cruiser and David walked off to check on it with Regina close behind with nothing else to do.

Clearly, the woman had no intention of entertaining Emma’s wishes on returning as the acting Sherriff.

Right now the blonde tried to convince herself that it didn’t sting as much as it did three years ago when she had left. However, since it had only been a month for the town of Storybrooke, Emma was beginning to pick up on old feelings and old wounds that had begun to scab over was being picked at despite her wishes.

‘What type of mage do you think did this, Emma?’ questioned Happy curiously. ‘I sense a great deal of magic concentration in this area and from what I can tell it’s pretty old.’

‘Mm,’ hummed Emma. ‘Just remember that the town’s magical presence could also be interfering. The Dark Curse is centuries old and its particles pulse all around the town. Though, you are right. I do sense a difference between this magic and that of Regina’s. This is some ancient shit no one should be messing with, little buddy.’

The two made their way past several large icicles that reached out of the ground. Happy nearly slipped a few times as they made their way up the small slope and Emma put him out of his misery by lifting him off the floor. The small feline settled on Emma’s shoulder whilst the blonde forged deeper into the cave.

Rounding a corner, Emma’s eyes landed on a pale blonde woman dressed in a beautiful light blue gown. It matched perfectly with the ice around her and the dragon couldn’t help but think that she was truly a vision to behold. Perhaps not on the same level of beauty as Regina’s, but Emma was in
love with the woman so that didn’t really count when it came to comparing them.

The woman took a step forward and held her hand up defensively. The light glow of magic underneath her palm did not go unnoticed by Emma nor Happy for that matter. For a moment the three just stared at one another which included mainly gaping on the savior’s part for finding someone she hadn’t seen in town before.

It was only a month she was gone is this time, right?

She’s daft at times—Happy likes to remind her—but surely even she would remember seeing a woman with ice powers around town before.

‘H—Hi,’ greeted Emma sheepishly, flashing a bright smile at the sorceress.

Happy rolled his eyes before slapping a paw to his forehead at the blonde’s reaction. At least it seemed as if it was calming this mysterious woman down, if only for a small amount.

‘Who are you?’

On Emma’s shoulder, Happy making a *tsk* sound and crossed his arms over his chest.

‘Now, Emma, is that how you greet new people? You sound like a weirdo. People who are weirdos scare off nice people like her.’

‘Hey!’ hissed Emma, scowling over at Happy. ‘Quit being such a wise guy.’

Shaking her head, Emma turned back to the frightened woman and barely managed to lose the tic of annoyance on her forehead.

It was obvious that this woman was capable of using magic and if she were to be set off, then it could end badly for all of them.

‘I apologize for Happy. He has a huge mouth and no filter whatsoever.’

‘Happy,’ repeated Elsa slowly, beginning to lower her hand as she glanced over to the yellow feline. ‘What a peculiar name. What is it?’

‘What?’ scoffed Happy, eyes widening in disbelief. ‘It? I’m a Tom Cat, thank you very much. Are you always this rude when addressing people you don’t even know?’

‘Happy!’

‘Oh, I’m sorry. I meant no offense,’ the woman hurriedly corrected herself. ‘Perhaps we can start over? My name is Elsa.’

‘I’m Emma,’ the blonde motioned towards herself and then towards the critter swinging its tail back and forth behind her back. ‘This is my traveling companion and best friend, Happy. He’s an exceed.’

‘Aye, sir!’

‘What are you doing way out here?’ questioned Emma, placing her hands on her hips and exposing her bare torso as she pushed back her waistcoat. ‘Did you by chance have something to do with the wall?’

*Instead of answering the question, Elsa held up a snowflake necklace for them both to see. Happy*
tilted his head to the side in curiosity.

‘I’m looking for someone—my sister—and this belonged to her.’

Sprouting his wings, Happy flew off Emma’s shoulder, making Elsa jump at the strange sight. However, the blonde recovered quickly and held the item in place so that Happy could inspect it.

‘May I?’ Happy tentatively reached out towards the necklace, looking up into Elsa’s blue eyes for permission. ‘I’ll be really careful,’ reassured the feline. ‘I’m good like that with small things.’

Emma nodded her head in agreement and smiled reassuringly in order to urge the blonde to let the exceed take the piece of jewelry.

With some hesitation, Elsa placed the necklace in Happy’s paws. The feline held it up for inspection and going as far as sniffing it.

‘I found it in the store filled with things,’ clarified Elsa. ‘Do you know where she is?’

‘No, but we can help look for her,’ promised Emma. ‘What’s her name?’

‘Anna.’

Happy held the necklace out towards Elsa so she could take it back, but David and Regina chose to arrive in that moment.

‘Emma!’ David called out towards her, unholstering his gun.

He and Regina both spotted the blonde next to Emma and Happy, immediately taking offensive stances.

In her hand Regina lit a fireball, clearly on the verge of firing it towards Elsa if she was given a good enough reason to do so.

‘No,’ warned Emma, holding her hands out towards her father and the sorceress as she tried to calm them both down.

Happy flew in front of Elsa and held out both his paws in order to keep her from any harm.

‘Stay back,’ warned Emma. ‘It’s okay! She just wants to find her—’

Because of the tension and of being threatened, Elsa’s breathing quickened. Around the three of them snowflakes began to form and began to build into what appeared to be a blizzard of emotion. Gigantic icicles rose out of the ground and began to separate them from one another.

‘Emma!’ Regina called out, and Emma swore that what she heard in the brunette’s voice was most likely desperation and perhaps even fear.

An avalanche of a sort showered down on both the sorceress and the prince. It sent them falling backwards onto the slope and placed even more distance between them and the three now trapped inside the icy cave.

There was only a sheer number of times that Regina Mills had been scared in her life and she could count them all on one hand. However, this was an entirely new experience all together.

Currently, Emma was on the other side of that icy wall and trapped with some kind of woman who had an unknown limit of magical powers.
Without a second thought, Regina whirled on David and grasped onto the walkie-talkie on his belt. She pressed the button on his side before she spoke into the device.

Regina knew there wasn’t any real reason to panic yet, so logically she needed to approach the situation in a calm and collected manner.

‘Miss Swan. Miss Swan. Emma, can you hear me?’

The only sound that she received in return was the sound of empty static.

That could mean a number of things: The radio had been damaged, or Emma had yet to switch it on. However, the one that was mainly flashing in Regina’s mind was that Emma was injured and she needed help, or worse, she needed medical attention.

Regina growled before she shoved the radio back into David’s hands before she stormed up the icy slope in order to approach the barrier between herself and the three inside the cave. All David could do was scramble after her in order to see what she was planning.

Two fireballs lit up respectively in the brunette’s hands and she proceeded to melt the thick ice. However, she barely made even a dent before it was replaced with more ice as it regenerate faster than Regina’s magic could melt it.

‘What kind of magic is this?’ hissed Regina angrily, extinguishing her hands when she noticed that it wasn’t helping in any way and that she was only wasting her magical energy.

‘Maybe we can lift it?’ suggested David, bending down to grasp onto one of the boulders. Before he could lift it, Regina growled behind him and drew his attention back to her.

‘Save your strength,’ spat the sorceress. ‘The only person who can break through this wall is the person who created it.’
I Can’t Feel My Legs!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

‘I can’t feel my legs! I can’t feel my legs!’

‘That’s because those are my legs, Happy.’

‘...Oh. Sorry.’

Dusting the ice and snow out of their hair and off themselves, Emma and Happy rose up off the ground.

It was freezing cold. That was the first thing that the blonde noticed.

She never got cold with the magic that she possessed now and that was a sure sign that something was wrong.

There was also the fact that Emma couldn’t feel a trace of her magic. That was all the reason she needed to panic.

It wasn’t often that Emma couldn’t be able to control her magic, but given the fact that she had only just begun to master her light magic and the fiery dragon inside of her, she was still learning. Sometimes flukes like these were inevitable and they usually came at the worst of times.

‘Ow,’ grumbled Emma, stumbling slightly as she rose one of her hands up to the cut next to her right eyebrow.

Penetrable skin. That was another bad sign.

Your such a damn novice, Swan. You fuckin’ idiot.

‘Emma, you kind of forgot to mention that your father and your girlfriend are two compulsive idiots who don’t seem to know how to listen very well.’

‘Don’t you start,’ warned Emma, pointed a finger towards the small feline. ‘What’s done is done. We have bigger problems now than them. I can’t feel my magic.’

Happy’s eyes widened as he stared up at Emma in shock, ‘Uh-oh.’

Uh-oh was right. They were in trouble now.

They turned towards Elsa as the blonde began to rise to her feet, who seemingly looked much more of a nervous wreck than they did.

She took sharp gasped breaths and it only seemed to be the beginning of the panic attack that the sorceress was about to have.

‘Anna’s necklace,’ gasped Elsa, gripping at her chest as if she was trying to literally tear out the agony she felt there.

Tears spilt over the woman’s cheeks and dropped down on the icy floor. Around them the snowflakes were worsening and had begun to build into that of the small blizzard they had
experienced a moment earlier.

‘I need—I need—’

‘Shh,’ soothed Emma.

In two short steps Emma grasped onto both of her hands and almost instantly the magic that was had built seeped into Emma’s body and relieved Elsa of the temporary burden.

‘It’s okay. Calm down, alright?’

‘Yeah,’ added Happy, sprouting his wings before flying up onto Emma’s shoulder. ‘We’ll find it. I must have just dropped it when the ice wall sprouted out of the ground.’

Elsa shook her head, and despite having calmed down significantly there were still a few tears rolling down her cheeks.

‘I can’t—I can’t control it.’

‘That’s okay,’ reassured Emma. ‘You don’t have to. Just focus on your breathing, focus on the sound of my voice and just relax.’

The snowfall around them began to lessen and soon enough it dissipated entirely.

Emma released a sigh of relief before releasing Elsa’s hands. She then took Happy into her arms as she began tucking him tightly against her chest.

‘We’re going to need you to calm down enough to break us through that wall,’ informed Emma, glancing over to the collapsed entrance as she pursed her lips. ‘I don’t have my magic and we’re going to freeze to death otherwise.’

‘Anna,’ it came as a whisper, but Emma heard it loud and clear. ‘If your friends could find her, then I would be able to get us out of here. She helps me control it.’

Elsa reached up to where Anna’s necklace was before she remembered that it no longer hung there.

‘I know how you feel,’ acknowledged Emma, placing her chin down on top of Happy’s head. ‘He does the same for me whenever I get out of control.’

‘Aye, sir!’ nodded Happy enthusiastically, smiling broadly.

The radio, that hung on Emma’s leather pants, cracked to life and David’s voice could faintly be heard on the other end.

Elsa jumped slightly in fright at the sound and her hands flew out defensively as she tried to place some distance between herself and them.

‘What is that?’

‘Whoa,’ Emma held out one hand, trying to calm the blonde down before she triggered another cave in.

Judging by the large icicles above their heads, it was safe to guess that there was a slim chance they would survive.

Emma had no intention of becoming a frozen kebab today.
‘It’s a radio—a device that’ll help me talk to my father and friend on the other side of that wall.’

The sorceress kept her one hand securely on the feline pressed against her chest, whilst the other reached down to the walkie-talkie. Emma pressed the button on its side and lifted it towards her lips.

‘Dad, can you hear me?’

‘Emma.’

Regina’s voice filled their ears and for a moment Emma thought she had hallucinated it. However, it was loud and clear as day, and filled with something that sounded oddly like worry. The last bit had Emma questioning her sanity.

‘Say again.’

*And, man. Just how hard did I hit my head?*

‘I’m in here with this woman, Elsa, she is looking for her sister, Anna. She thinks that Anna is in town because she found a necklace of hers in Gold’s shop.’

‘If she’s going to bring this wall down, she needs you to find her and bring her here.’

‘Why can’t you just use your magic?’ The brunette questioned. ‘Surely, you are capable enough of melting the ice, Emma.’ Regina’s voice lacked its usual bite which caused Emma to raise her eyebrow curiously.

‘I’d love to, but my magic is a little AWOL right now. There’s no time to get into it right now and I don’t want to freeze to death.’

‘...’

‘We’ll try and find this Anna,’ reassured David. ‘Just stay where you are. We’ll be back soon.’

Emma rolled her eyes.

*Well, where the hell am I going to go?*

Happy grasped the radio and pulled it from Emma’s hands, ‘Oh, Mr. Dad and scary-mean-lady,’ began the feline, a serious expression on his forehead. ‘Could you bring some fish too? I’m starving.’

‘Happy,’ scolded Emma.

‘...’

David’s chuckle carried through the radio. ‘Once we get you out, you can have all of the fish you want back at the loft, Happy.’

The silence that followed was deafening and Emma had to mute the radio in order to calm her nerves.

It felt as though the temperature was consistently dropping and her mind was so out of focus that she couldn’t even think of summoning forth her magic let alone actually do it.

Harsh conditions like this wasn’t uncommon to the blonde, but she had had her magic with her most of the time to overcome it.
Now her thoughts were too occupied with being back in Storybrooke and her emotions were all over the place.

Happy shivered in her grasp and Emma took off her waistcoat before she wrapped the small feline in it.

He didn’t protest at the gesture and didn’t dare to question it.

No matter what Happy could say he knew that Emma had already made up her mind. She always put his needs above her own and there was no bargains with a stubborn mule.

It felt like hours which in reality was only ten minutes, but Emma’s shivering had worsened. She forced Happy to conserve his magic to keep himself warm, but at least the small amount of heat that he was providing kept her canines from clattering.

Elsa on the other hand didn’t seem affected at all by the harsh temperatures.

‘Aren’t you cold?’ inquired the dragon, pulling Happy closer to her chest when she felt the creature shivering once more. ‘I’m freezing.’

Elsa merely shrugged her shoulders, as if she answered the question often enough to be used to it by now.

‘It’s never bothered me.’ Elsa waved her hands, spurring on small bursts of blue light from her palms. ‘Ice magic.’

‘Right,’ Emma nodded her head in understanding and began to softly pet Happy between his ears.

The exceed slowly closed his eyes as it began to purr in satisfaction. It wasn’t ideal but if Emma could distract him for the moment, then it would be possible to take a small amount of discomfort her friend felt.

‘Me too, but sadly my magic is being an ass.’

The blonde tilted her head curiously as her eyes shone with interest. It didn’t take more than a few braincells to realize that this woman hadn’t seen another person with magical abilities.

In fact, Elsa seemed as though she might explode with excitement for a brief second before she composed herself.

Emma put two-and-two together from the way the younger woman carried herself and guessed that she might be some form of royalty.

The dragon had spent enough time around regal people like Elsa to be able to spot them in a crowd.

‘What kind of magic do you use?’

‘Well, lots of types, actually.’ shrugged Emma, scratching the side of her head in thought. ‘I’m the product of true love, so I have light magic. I use world-crossing magic, which I picked up from a crazy, immortal old hag in Dunbroch.’

‘That must come quite in handy,’ mused Elsa, nodding her head. ‘Have you used it often?’

‘Oh, yeah,’ confirmed Emma, grinning from ear to ear. ‘Traveled to twenty-seven different realms in the past three years.’
‘Fascinating. What else can you do?’

‘Oh, well,’ Emma chuckled nervously, rubbing the back of her neck as she glanced down at Happy.

The creature’s eyes were shut tightly, but squirmed slightly in discomfort that Emma had stopped her soothing touches. Immediately, Emma returned her free hand to the top of his head and smiled in amusement.

‘I, um—get this—I can turn into a dragon.’

Elsa’s eyes widened in shock as she watched Emma nodding her head in confirmation. The blonde opened and closed her mouth a few times but nothing came forth except utter silence.

In Emma’s opinion she was handling it much better than she was certain her family would. Elsa didn’t even seem scared at all, but more intrigued than anything else.

It must have something to do with the fact that Elsa was most likely used to people staring at her like a monster that she knew exactly what it felt like.

‘It’s still relatively knew, or well, three years new, but that’s like new born to dragons. It’s... well it’s sort of a gift from the gods.’

‘How did you come to find this gift?’

Elsa’s words weren’t condescending. They were filled with wonder and genuine curiosity.

It filled Emma with relief to tell someone about what had happened in the past three years without the fear of having them see her as this... beast.

‘I’ve never heard of people being transformed into dragons.’

Emma shrugged her shoulders, ‘It happens quite often, actually. People get cursed, blessed or are born with the gift. The first one being the most common one.’

Happy sneezed suddenly from the cold and caused the two women to laugh as his eyes fluttered open sleepily.

Emma shook her head in amusement and began to scratch behind the exceed’s ears. The creature’s purring increased significantly and his eyes began to flutter closed once more.

‘In my case, it depends on which god you please most. Hephaestus, is the Greek god of blacksmiths, metalworking, carpenters, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metallurgy, fire, and volcanoes. He was the one who granted me the gift of fire after I retrieved his hammer from Daedalus’s labyrinth.’

‘It sounds to me like you two have been on quite a few adventures over the years,’ Elsa pointed out. ‘It must be nice to go where you please, to see different worlds and cultures.’ The blonde took a deep breath, her shoulders drooping sadly. ‘For most of my life I was sheltered from the outside world because my parents feared my powers and thought that others would too. This... this town is the farthest I’ve been from my kingdom.’

‘Maybe, when we get out of here and I helped you find your sister, we could go see some of the places that you never got to see as a child. I’m not really the type to settle down and I have a feeling I’m going to get restless here.’
Elsa shook her head as she smiled at Emma’s offer, ‘That’s very kind of you, but I have to return to my land. I have responsibilities and obligations as I imagine that you have to this town. Your family is here, are they not? Why would you want to leave?’

‘It’s not that I want to,’ sighed Emma. ‘I just have the tendency to hurt those I care about. Can’t hurt the people around you if you aren’t around them, right?’

‘I suppose that is true,’ hummed Elsa. ‘However, it can become quite lonely. It might be easier to shut out the people you love, but ultimately it is the hardest thing you could possibly do.’

‘I just...’ Emma trailed off, biting down on her bottom lip.

She was tired of running, but what choice did she have? She was no savior and she definitely not this beacon of selflessness and hope that would give everyone their happy endings.

In fact, she was more likely to take away the happy endings than she was capable of restoring them.

‘I’m tired. I—I think I’m gonna lie down for a minute.’

 Maneuvering herself so that she could lie on the icy floor, Emma missed the look of panic and fear that flashed across Elsa’s face.

The queen rushed forward and fell to her knees beside the dragon in an attempt to keep both of them awake.

‘Emma. Emma, talk to me,’ pleaded Elsa, forcing Emma to remain seated upright. ‘Tell me more. Were you born with this light magic or cursed with it?’

‘Are those my only too options?’ chuckled Emma, her canines beginning to clatter down on one another. ‘I don’t really know. I was raised in a place where magic didn’t exist and only discovered my powers around three years ago, just before I left. I had to teach most of what I know to myself since I don’t have parents who can help me and the only person who could is pissed at me.’

The queen nodded her head in agreement and rubbed her hands up and down Emma’s bare shoulders in order to provide some form of warmth for her.

‘Parents don’t always help,’ agreed Elsa sadly. ‘I ended up the queen of a large land unprepared.’

‘Yeah, I get a thing or two about being unprepared. I’m this savior that’s supposed to bring back everyone’s happy ending and I just keep screwing up. I hurt the woman I love by accidentally bringing her boyfriend’s wife back from the dead—Don’t look at me like that. You’re brain will explode if I even begin to explain—and I have this constant on-and-off switch that forces me to run when things get hard.’

‘Sometimes it gets too hard and all you want to do is pack your things and leave,’ Elsa chuckled sadly. ‘I wish that were a possibility for me, but I wouldn’t know the first thing to do if I went out on my own.’

Emma smiled sadly, ‘It sucks being alone sometimes, doesn’t it?’

Elsa nodded her head, ‘It does in fact suck.’

Emma once again resumed her efforts to lie down on the floor, her skin a sickly color white and her lips completely blue.
Gingerly, she wrapped both her arms tightly around Happy, who had fallen sound asleep and warm enough so that he wouldn’t freeze to death like Emma was sure she was about to.

‘I’m very sorry that I trapped us in here,’ Elsa’s words came out in the form of a sob, tears building up in her eyes. ‘I didn’t mean it.’

‘I know,’ reassured Emma, on the brink of loosing consciousness. ‘It’s okay.’

‘Emma?’ Elsa shook the woman slightly, trying to force her to sit up once more. ‘Emma!’

**The Enchanted Forest—Past**

The evening air was colder than usual and the fire burned brightly in front of Emma. The exceed’s egg was tucked safely against her stomach as she sat on her bedroll and stared at the flame that flickered and cracked.

Mulan and Ruby were both fast asleep. Emma had offered to take the first shift because she desperately needed time to herself to think. Her friends had been reluctant, but their exhaustion had won out in the end.

Surviving had been Emma’s only goal thus far, so she hadn’t the chance to even think of Regina or the problems waiting for her back home when she returned in three weeks time.

It had dawned on the savior that she could barely last against the worst of this world, so how was she supposed to keep an entire kingdom safe?

She could barely even last against a regular ruffian a few minutes.

Not to mention her magic was nonexistent, which Emma didn’t understand in the least. She had only just began to get the hang on it after Regina began helping her and now her mentor was not only furious with her, but she wouldn’t even acknowledge her existent.

A *ch* sound escaped Emma’s lips as she held the egg closer to her body and placed her chin on the shell.

Mulan and Ruby had reassured her that she didn’t need to ‘sit’ on the egg in order for it to hatch.

The two had a swell time teasing her about how it wasn’t a chicken egg.

Cats normally didn’t sprout from shells either nor did they have wings, but yet here they were.

Emma still hadn’t exactly adjusted to the whole magical world nor the strange creatures. She needed a little more time.

Her stomach gave a soft growl, reminding her that she was still in the mood for anything except chimera.

One of Granny’s famous grilled cheese sandwiches, or perhaps one of her barbecue sauce burgers.

She smacked her lips at the mere thought.

Not only did her stomach miss Storybrooke, but she did as well.

She missed her parents, she missed Henry and more importantly she missed Regina. However, even when she was in Storybrooke she missed the fiery brunette.
She knew that time away would do her some good, but the thought of returning home made her queasy. Especially when things would just remain the same between her and Regina for what could honestly be forever.

Emma had been okay with being "just friends". Regina and Robin were literally soulmates; they belonged together.

What chance would she even have in the first place?

How things were now however, Emma would rather want to kill herself than spend another day receiving the cold shoulder from Madame Mayor herself.

*I can sense a broken heart from all the way in Olympus, my dear.*

The blonde released a yelp as she scrambled to her feet, keeping her hold firm on the exceed’s egg in her arm.

She reached for her sword, but missed it a few times. By the sixth try she finally gripped onto the weapon and pulled it free.

Emma whirled around in a slight state of panic as she tried to find the voice’s owner.

Seeing no one, Emma slowly maneuvered towards her sleeping friends. She nudged Ruby with her foot and tried to awaken her.

‘Ruby,’ she whispered, then a little more urgently. ‘Ruby!’

*They won’t wake, child. Simply because I wish it so.*

A man, dressed in red blacksmith’s apron materialized across the fire from Emma.

His dark brown mustache and beard swallowed his lips and made him look like a younger, and uglier version of Santa Clause.

In the pockets of his apron was an assortment of tools one would typically use inside a medieval blacksmith somewhere during the eleventh century.

He was a big man, towering at least two feet above Emma herself.

Taking a step forward, now closer to the flames, the man placed his hands behind his back and smiled kindly at Emma.

The man was lame; walking with some difficulty. He glanced her up and down, admiring her physique as well as they way she carried herself with the weapon in her hands.

He didn’t appeared to be scared in the very least.

‘It’s nice to finally meet you in person, Emma.’

His dark onyx eyes were like two plumps of coal, but they had a glowing red outline. It wasn’t frightening, but it told Emma that this man was anything but human.

‘You’re far lovelier in person than you are from afar. I must also say that you don’t disappoint as the savior.’

‘The last person that said that to me was Peter Pan.’ Emma narrowed her eyes. ‘We didn’t exactly
get along.’

The woman tightened her grasp on the hilt of her sword and tilted her chin upwards.

‘Who are you, and what did you do to my friends?’

‘Straight to the point I see.’ The man chuckled softly.

He reached up to stroke his short beard as he continued to watch Emma intently.

‘My name is Hephaestus. Your friends are fine. They have just been put into a deeper slumber than usual.’

‘I desperately need to speak with you, my dear.’

Emma rose an eyebrow, ‘Hephaestus? Like the Greek god?’

His onyx eyes sparked with mirth as he pointed towards Emma.

‘Precisely, Emma. I am the god of fire and forge.’

Rolling her eyes, Emma thought to herself:

Why am I even surprised by these kind of things anymore?

Emma steeled herself before the god and bettered her stance.

She wouldn’t trust anyone who held the ability to wipe some out with their pinky finger.

No matter how "jolly" this god appeared, she wasn’t about to let her guard down. Especially when she was the only one who stood between him and her friends’ safety.

‘I have a proposition for you, Emma,’ informed the god. ‘One that I think you should consider.’

‘Oh, yeah?’ Emma scoffed. ‘And why would I listen to anything you have to say?’

‘Because, I know what it’s like to be cast aside, abandoned, forgotten.’ Hephaestus shrugged his shoulders as his smile shrunk.

‘You and I, we are much alike. And I would prefer it if my champion knew the pain I carry inside myself every day.’

She was mad for allowing this god to strike a cord on her, but what did she have to lose?

Emma lowered her sword.

‘I’m listening.’

Chapter End Notes

I’d apologize for the cliffhangers, but that’s just not the kind of person I am. I’ve suffered through countless of stories with them and I think that it’s only fair that I do it to you guys.
Thanks for reading!

See you all on Thursday!
I have to say, all this positive feedback is really motivating me. Also, I’m not afraid to take—what’s the word—constructive criticism—I think it was—because I want to grow as a writer. Just don’t be... you know... an ass. I like it when you guys tell me that there’s something that doesn’t sit right with you like one of the guests did in the previous chapter. I sometimes try something different to see if it works and if it doesn’t then so what.

So, thank you Guest!

Waves with both hands

I may only have a few notes, or a note. I’ll decide what I want to tell you guys in a minute.

I don’t know how long this fic is going to be, since it’s a whole series or collection. If you guys may or may not have noticed, it’s called An Orphan Dragon. This is just the first one.

So, I need ideas guys. Desperately.

But, enough of me talking.

‘It appears our honeymoon is over.’

‘Well, sorry to interrupt whatever kinky plans you and Miss French have planned today, but we wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t an emergency.’

The Dark One was the last person that Regina wanted to go to and ask for help. One of the main reasons being that Rumplestiltskin wouldn’t even think of passing up the opportunity to hold this over her head. Not to mention it was going to be quite damaging to her pride admitting that she wasn’t powerful enough to melt the ice. The sorceress would literally chew off her own arm rather than be standing there in Gold’s shop.

Though Regina had come to realize that she didn’t care about any of that. Given Emma’s state of dress, or more likely undress than anything else, there was little chance for her to survive long inside the cave. The thought of Emma’s lifeless corpse on the floor filled Regina with unimaginable fear and caused her heart to clench in pain, even if she would rather die than admit that out loud.

‘Emma and Happy are trapped under ice by a woman with some kind of ice magic,’ informed David tentatively when it was obvious that Regina was adamant on not saying anything further.

‘And this involves me... because?’

‘You’re the Dark One for gods’ sakes,’ spat Regina, crossing her arms over her chest as her eyes flashed in anger. ‘I can’t melt the ice with my magic. So do something, you infuriating little imp.’
‘Oh,’ laughed Gold, eyes shining with mirth. ‘Temper, temper, temper, dearie. I could destroy it with a thought, but that would also destroy Emma and this Happy you are talking about. Is that what you want?’

David held up a hand between Regina and Rumple in order to try and douse the escalating argument and/or fight that was about to break out when the former would lunge for the man. As much as Regina found Charming annoying and the amount of times she had called him an idiot, the man had his moments sometimes.

Spread out and far in between, but they were there nonetheless.

‘No one’s destroying anyone,’ hissed David, head darting in between the two magic users. ‘Now, the woman who has them trapped is in there with her and looking for her sister. Name of Anna. She thinks she’s in town because of something of hers she found found in your shop. A necklace.’

Belle reached out to a small card on the glass counter with a small snowflake necklace attached to it with a paperclip. She held it up towards Regina, who practically grabbed it out of her hand. The queen didn’t recognize it and that infuriated her more than anything in her life had ever had.

‘Is that it?’ questioned Belle, looking up at David as the man glanced over Regina’s shoulder to get a better look at the small picture.

‘Wait,’ David took the card and held it closer so that he could inspect it more thoroughly. ‘I know this. I know who exactly this belongs to.’

‘Well, do share with the class, Shepherd.’

‘In a minute,’ assured David before looking up at Belle. ‘Thank you. You’ve helped me more than you know.’

‘Just, when you save Emma,’ Belle began tentatively. ‘Tell her I would like to talk to her. I would like to know how Ruby has been doing.’

David smiled sadly before he nodded his head in agreement. He then turned towards Regina.

‘Come on, we have someone to see.’

Freezing to death was not the way Emma imagined that she would go out. Perhaps an honorable death like Maleficent or from the heartbreak she experienced because of Regina’s silent treatment and the three years of not hearing her at all, but never did she imagine she would actually freeze to death. The dragon’s fire within her prevented such things. However, because she was still learning to control the beast, she was more often than not abandoned by it. When Hephaestus had given her the gift, he had told her it would be like this from time to time and because of that she couldn’t always just rely on her magic.

Emma drifted in and out of consciousness because of Elsa’s insistence on trying to wake her up and Happy’s heartbeat that thumped rhythmically in her ears, strong and sure, and guaranteeing that at least he might make it out alive. It filled Emma with hope that she was at least able to do one thing right if she was able to save Happy. Perhaps even he would be better off without her since he would no longer be put into dangerous situations like this. Everyone else would definitely be better off if she wasn’t around to jinx their happiness.

In the past three years, Emma had gotten close to death numerous times and she had come to see the pattern that always followed; reminiscing in the good times, self-hatred because of mistakes she had
made that were never even on purpose. She was quite tired of it really, because somehow she always managed to survive and then afterwards she found herself back to square one with the pain and hurt she felt since before she left Storybrooke.

When Emma opened her eyes again, she found Elsa hovering worriedly above her as she cradled Emma’s head in her lap. It was oddly comforting to know that she wouldn’t die alone, but at the same time it terrified her. If she were to die then the only form of heat that Happy had would disappear and with that his chances of survival.

Shaking her head, she tried to force herself to stay awake, if not for herself then for the small furry creature that was snoring away without a care in the world. She would be damned if she let her pseudo child die at such a young age. Emma might not be the best of parents and perhaps she was even someone you didn’t let your kids near, but she would gladly give her life for Happy and her son, Henry.

‘Emma, please,’ begged Elsa, bringing the blonde’s wandering and unfocused eyes back to her blue orbs. ‘Tell me about your son, about this woman you love. Anything at all.’

Emma smiled weakly at the thought of Henry and Regina. It was nearly enough to thaw her freezing limbs from the warmth that spread out through her chest. For a moment Emma had hoped that it would ignite the fire in her, but sadly she remained powerless and freezing cold.

‘Henry’s... He’s a—He’s such a good—a good kid, you know?’ stuttered Emma, eyes fluttering opened and closed every now and then. ‘Top—top of his class. Never picks fights... Though there was this one time—this one time he came home with a bloody nose... from school. Regina... his other mom... she was so mad. Though, kid got off scot free because he hadn’t even thrown a punch. He put himself between a bully and this other nerdy kid.’ The blonde smiled fondly at the memory. ‘Kid’s got guts just like I did at that age. Too heroic for his own damn good.’

‘Are you, as you say, too heroic for your own damn good?’

Emma sighed and shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly.

The truth was that that was indeed the case.

There had been countless of foster homes where Emma had physically shielded younger foster siblings with her own body rather than let a drunkard touch a defenseless child.

And yeah, that probably meant she was too heroic for her own good and more often than not the only person that she hurt was herself.

‘I guess,’ muttered Emma, sniffling her nose. ‘The world I grew up in, well, being a hero gets you killed most of the time. I was put into the hospital because I was too stubborn.’

‘I’m sorry,’ whispered Elsa sadly.

She pulled Emma closer to her stomach and it was like she was trying to shield the blonde from the horrors of her past. Emma smiled softly at the gesture even if it wouldn’t do any good.

‘I can’t imagine...’ Elsa trailed off sadly, voice filled with sympathy.

‘S’fine,’ chuckled Emma, snuggling slightly closer.

Surprisingly, someone like her with ice powers was warmer than most people.
It was ironic really.

‘Though, thank—thank you,’ Emma added. ‘That’s the closest I’ve come to an apology for the way I grew up and honestly I’m—I’m kinda over it. For the most at least.’

Closing her eyes, Emma began to slip back into a deep, dreamless slumber.

* 

The satisfaction Regina felt for threatening Bo Peep was too empty to be able to enjoy it. Though they might have gotten the staff to be able to track this Anna woman, Emma’s life was still in mortal danger and according to Elsa it wasn’t long before the blonde froze to death.

Not even bothering with the cruiser, Regina had teleported herself and David back to the town line in order to avoid wasting any more time than they already had.

The sorceress and prince made their way back up the slope. Regina forcibly grabbed the radio from David’s hand as he set Bo Peep’s shepherd crook against the icy wall. If the man wanted to protest, Regina commended him for being smart enough to keep his tongue. All she received in return was a raised eyebrow, which she would rather not dwell on what he meant by it.

‘Elsa,’ Regina called into the microphone, clutching desperately onto the radio up until the point of causing her knuckles to turn completely white. ‘What’s Emma’s condition?’

‘She’s freezing, turning blue. Happy is still very much awake and warm enough for the time being.’

Though she knew it was wrong, Regina couldn’t find it in her heart to be concerned about the small feline. If it were up to her she would have strangled the exceed the moment he called her scary-mean-lady. The queen did not look forward to being forced to spend time with Happy if she and Emma managed to begin to restore any form of a civil relationship.

‘Listen to me, you sorry-excuse-of-a-novice—’

David yanked the radio out of Regina’s grasp, despite the death grip that she had administered. The sorceress shot the prince a glare and wondering if there was a way to make strangulation look like an accident.

‘Give me back the device, Shepherd.’

‘No,’ refused David adamantly. ‘It’s not going to help threatening her. For all we know we could end up making it worse. This woman doesn’t want to hurt anyone. Her powers are out of control because she’s scared and emotional.’

‘The mother of my child is trapped in there, freezing to death,’ hissed Regina, looking at David like he was the most clueless person to ever walk the Earth. ‘I—Henry can’t lose her. Not after we had only just gotten her back.’

If David noticed her mix-ups, then he was wise enough not to say anything or even indicate that he had heard her. In fact, his eyes softened in a way that it only did whenever Henry’s well-being was brought up.

‘She’s not going to die,’ promised David. ‘We’re going to get her out of there and then we’ll be back home drinking hot cocoa in no time. However, we can’t make this woman any more nervous than she already is. Let me talk to her?’

Seeing that she had no other choice, Regina crossed her arms over her chest before giving a resigned nod.
She turned to face away from David and towards the wall once more as if she could see Emma’s shivering form on the other side. Regina brought her thumb up to bite it between her teeth as she allowed herself to become the equivalent of a worried loved one.

Nothing she could do now would be able to save the dying blonde.

It was all up to David and Elsa now.

‘Elsa, listen to me,’ began David. ‘I need you to find a way out.’

‘...’

The radio crackled with static for a few moments and each of them felt like an eternity. Regina was almost on the point of blaming herself for scaring the sorceress into silence.

‘I need Anna.’

‘Well, we don’t have her right now, but we have a way to find her. And we will,’ assured David. ‘But right now you’re gonna have to do this on your own.’

‘I can’t control this.’

David released a deep sad sigh, ‘I know how you feel, you're trapped. It's a battle you can't win. But it's exactly the kind of battle you have to fight. Or you'll die.’

‘No, I won't, I'll survive. But Emma—’

‘Survival isn't enough. You have to live.’

‘...’

Another pause and all Regina was seemingly capable of doing was swallowing down the sobs that threatened to escape with each passing second.

‘Where did you hear that?’

‘You know where.’

‘Anna? You knew her?’

‘Yeah, I did,’ confirmed David, smiling as if he was remembering a fond memory of the woman they were speaking of. ‘She helped me once, a long time ago, become who I am. She saved my life. And yours. And now, I need you to save Emma's.’ The prince was pleading by now and tears shone in his eyes. ‘I didn't know much about Anna, but she wouldn't want you to live alone in an ice cave. Which is where you'll be if you don't melt that ice. Now do it.’

‘...’

A beat passed.

Then another and another, and Regina was convinced that she was never going to see that obnoxious toothy grin of Emma or those mirth filled mossy green eyes that she swore could stare right into the very heart of her soul.

It was then that a hole big enough to hoist the human form out of began to appear in the icy wall.
Jumping into action, Regina summoned two fireballs and begun to aid Elsa in melting the wall.

‘It’s working,’ exclaimed David in relief mixed with something that no doubt resembled excitement. He bent over to glance deeper into the cave. ‘I can see them.’

Just as the last buts of ice fell away, Happy flew with Emma and helped them aid her in exiting the icy tomb. She was blue and cold to the touch. Even if she might have her waistcoat wrapped around her form, it did little to aid in providing her any form of body heat.

‘Emma,’ David called as he and Regina tugged respectively on each of her arms. ‘Emma—’

Before David could wrap his arms around his daughter, Regina tugged the woman into a tight embrace. Too exhausted and cold to resist, Emma allowed the brunette to pulled them flush against one another as if she was afraid that the blonde was going to disappear.

Which she was.

Regina didn’t even register David helping Elsa out of the cave, as she was too occupied with Emma’s face tucked into the crook of neck.

‘Let’s get her home, warmed up,’ suggested David.

Paying him no mind, the sorceress pulled away from the embrace and cupped both of Emma’s cheeks. Her brows furrowed with worry as she glanced at the cut on Emma’s head.

‘What on Earth were you thinking?’ hissed Regina, though her voice lacked any anger or frustration. ‘Going in there whilst being dressed so inadequately. You could have frozen to death, you idiot.’

‘I missed—I missed you—you too,’ Emma smiled weakly before her knees gave out. Regina effortlessly caught the blonde in her arms.

With a wave of her hand, they disappeared in a cloud of purple smoke and leaving the other three stranded there with only the Mercedes to return to town.

Which Regina had the keys of.

David blinked. ‘Did she just—’

‘Aye, sir.’

‘And we’re stuck—’

‘Aye, sir.’

‘...’

Elsa frowned. ‘That wasn’t very nice.’

*Enchanted Forest—Past*

Ruby was furious. So furious that she could devour an entire mob of a thousand men and all that would remain was their bones.

The blonde wincing in front of her, who had every reason to do so, filled the she-wolf with a sense of pride. It angered her that she couldn’t even enjoy it.
‘You’re going to what?!’

Mulan turned towards Ruby. She had been standing next to her, as though they were two parents preparing to reprimand their child for trying to steal cookies before dinner. According to the way that Emma was trying to crawl in on herself, she might as well be that child.

‘She said that she was going to—’

Ruby growled, ‘I heard what she said!’

The warrior gave a small smirk at the tick mark that might as well have appeared on Ruby’s forehead. The vein that pulsed there didn’t do anything to soothe Mulan’s amusement, but seemed to only encourage it.

‘What I’m trying to understand is what the hell is going through her mind.’ Ruby gave Emma an accusatory look, only to receive a sheepish smile in return.

They had all woken up as they did every morning, they ate, they cleared the campsite and they packed up their things and attached them to the two horses. However, as they were preparing to leave, Emma had told them about her conversation with Hephaestus. That she was actually going to risk her life in order to retrieve a hammer of his.

Ruby had given her word to Mary Margaret that she wouldn’t allow anything to happen to her daughter. Yet, a trip to and then through Daedalus’s labyrinth would not only be a threat to that promise, but was downright imbecilic.

The maze was littered with monsters of all shapes and sizes, let’s not forget the automatons that waited for them in the heart of the labyrinth if they lived long enough to reach it and the fact that no one has ever made it out alive.

‘I don’t expect the two of you to come along,’ reassured Emma, losing her sheepishness and replacing it with a stern expression. Ruby couldn’t doubt that she was anything but serious now. ‘It’s probably dangerous and I can’t expect the two of you to risks your lives because I feel like I have something to figure out.’

‘Are you an idiot?’ Ruby huffed indignantly.

Emma frowned in confusion and opened her mouth to answer.

The she-wolf held her hand up in annoyance and pinched the bridge of her nose, ‘Don’t answer that.’ Like a petulant child not getting their way, Ruby stomped her foot, ‘Why? Why do you have to do this? There’s plenty of monsters out here, and I’m not just talking about the ogres.’

‘Look, Ruby.’ Emma’s shoulders shagged as she sighed, glancing down at the gravel beneath her boots. ‘My heads not been screwed on right as of lately.’ She looked up into Ruby’s blue orbs, adamant to get her point across. ‘I need to feel useful, and this Hephaestus guy said he’ll give me a chance to make a real difference in the world if I help him.’ Emma shrugged her shoulders slightly and smiled, ‘I’m the savior; who am I if I’m not helping people?’

Ruby narrowed her eyes at her friend and crossed her arms over her chest, ‘You’re an asshole, Swan. Do you know that?’

Emma nodded, ‘Yes. Yes, I do.’ The blonde smirked at her best friend, making Ruby want to punch her perfect teeth in. ‘But guess what? You’re my friend anyways.’
‘You’re starting to make me regret that,’ grumbled the she-wolf.

‘So, what’s the plan?’ Mulan questioned, mimicking Ruby’s stance. ‘Where do we find this legendary labyrinth?’

‘Well,’ Emma frowned as she reached into her back pocket, retrieving a small parchment. She began to unfold it and then held it out towards her friends. ‘Hephaestus gave me a map, but I can’t make heads or tails of it. You guys can just point me in the right direction and then I’ll be on my way.’

Mulan scoffed, snatching the map from Emma’s grasp, ‘And have you get yourself killed halfway there? I don’t know whether to feel offended or simply render you unconscious.’
Good morning guys!

So, I have a particularly nasty cold that wants to send me to my grave.

*Laughing maniacally: "Still alive!"

Anyways, this story is just getting better and better in my opinion and I’ve been enjoying it and all the nice kudos, comments and bookmarks. I feel like there’s a lot of potential here—especially cliffhangers—and I want to explore every idea.

But, enough of that. Onto the story!

The list of things that Emma found most enjoyable was short and had been constructed over the past three years and her time in the foster system:

1. *Eating food*
2. *Eating fire*
3. *Sleeping with Happy under the stars*
4. *Hugging Henry*

And now she could add one more thing to that list:

5. *Cuddling with Regina Mills*

And not necessarily all in that order, but Emma was never good with math in High School.

Perhaps a near death experience with the cold, of all things, wasn’t so bad if it rewarded her being pressed flush against the gorgeous brunette and covered in several blankets of all kinds.

In fact, Emma might just put herself in more life threatening situations if that meant she would be in Regina’s presence in this pleasant way.

Henry was in the loft’s kitchen preparing hot cocoa with cinnamon, so that the blonde could proceed to warm herself on the inside as well.

By now, David, Elsa and Happy had thankfully returned from the town line, albeit Charming was anything but elated regarding being abandoned by the former queen.

Whilst David and Elsa helped make the freezing blonde as comfortable as possible, Happy was rummaging in the kitchen in search of a large enough pot to no doubt light a fire for Emma to eat in.

It was probably not a good idea to let her family find out about her powers this way, but she didn’t give one ounce of a damn right now. When her stomach was growling and her teeth were clattering together like tap dancers on a wooden floor, she couldn’t find it in herself to think pass her discomforts let alone logically.
‘Gods-damnit, will my teeth just shut the hell up,’ hissed Emma in annoyance, tucking her face deeper into the crook of Regina’s neck.

If she wasn’t so focused on warming her shaking body, then Emma would have noticed the involuntary flush that spread across Regina’s cheeks as they sat there together on the couch.

Hell, she barely even noticed the death grip Regina had around her waist.

‘Serves you right, Miss Swan,’ scoffed Regina, trying to at least sound unconcerned with Emma’s well-being. ‘Like always you rush head first into a situation without thinking it through. You nearly died, and then where would you be?’

‘Well, somewhere that I didn’t get hounded by you 24/7, that’s for sure.’

‘I hound you?’ questioned Regina indignantly. ‘Need I remind you that I wouldn’t have to hound you, as you so eloquently put, if you weren’t so awfully stubborn and listened to me for once in your life.’

‘The last time I listened to you, you threw me off a cliff.’

‘Oh, that was one time and you saved yourself. Get. Over. It.’

‘You know what—’

David, Elsa, Happy and Henry stood behind the two women as they bickered back and forth. Henry had a cup of hot cocoa with cinnamon and tea in his hands, respectively, whilst Happy held a large pot in his hands. Their presence had now become completely unnoticed by Regina and Emma, as if they weren’t even in the room at all.

‘Do they always argue like this?’ questioned Elsa curiously, turning so that she could get a better look of David.

‘Unfortunately,’ answered Henry with a loud sigh. ‘It had gotten better, but then Ma went and brought Robin’s dead wife, Marian, back from the dead, and well... they hit a speed bump in their relationship... again.’

‘They fight like an old married couple,’ informed Happy, his tone raising a few decibels in a teasing matter. ‘Emma must really like Regina.’

Henry shook his head back and forth as he chuckled softly, ‘You have no idea, little guy.’

Sprouting his wings, the exceed decided to intervene as his worry for Emma’s well-being got in between his need for teasing the blonde. She still didn’t have her magic back and given how pale she was, Emma was still significantly weak.

What she needed now was a warm meal in her belly and a nice long nap.

As Happy landed on the floor in front of the bickering women, Emma silenced herself instantly and stopped mid-way through her jab at Regina.

Henry followed the furry yellow creature’s lead and approached his mothers with their respective cups. Curiously, he watched as Happy took off his small green backpack and begun to rummage through it. He pulled out assortments of trail mixes and other foods that the brunet didn’t recognize.

‘You had that in your pack the entire time?’ hissed Emma in annoyance, shooting her companion a
‘Glare. ‘I could’ve eaten in the cave.’

‘How was I supposed to know you vomited your breakfast at the side of the road, hmm?’ reasoned Happy, smirking mischievously.

The exceed sat down on the ground with the large pot between his legs and began to dump the assortment of foods into it.

‘You’re the one with Emmaphobia.’

‘“Emmaphobia”?’ parroted Regina, raising an eyebrow at Happy. ‘What is that?’

‘The fear of having motion sickness.’

A laugh echoed through the loft, and all Emma could do was pout as her cheeks burned with humiliation. Henry joined in on the laughter, amused by the look on his mother’s face.

‘I didn’t know you had motion sickness,’ teased Henry.

‘Neither did I, given your insistence on driving your beloved metal-death-trap all around my town. However, if I did then I would have found it much easier to drive you out of Storybrooke.’

‘Mom,’ warned Henry, crossing his arms over his chest and glaring at Regina. ‘Be nice.’

‘What?’ scoffed Regina indignantly. ‘I’m just being honest.’

‘It’s a recent thing, alright?’

Emma’s pout doubled as her heart suddenly began to ache unpleasantly. All at once her shivering stopped, even if her complexion didn’t improve in the slightest.

The bickering had been fine, to be honest.

Hell, Emma even enjoyed it because she missed hearing Regina’s voice. However, the dragon was harshly reminded that Regina still didn’t care about her, or at least her words pointed it out. She didn’t know what to make of the reaction outside the cave, but that was all blown away by the fact that Regina still didn’t want her in town.

Slowly, the blonde pulled away from Regina’s grasp, and before the brunette could protest, Emma ducked her efforts of trying to keep the blonde seated beside her.

‘I’m fine now,’ informed Emma, a little bitterly than she intended but she was hoping to get her point across.

The others noticed her sudden change in demeanor, especially Happy, who was now looking up from the pot and concernedly at Emma.

It wasn’t uncommon for the blonde to suddenly push away anyone who she deemed to be smothering her, this Happy knew, but it never ceased to worry him. Whenever she turned down any form of affection, it was because her mindset wasn’t in the right place or she felt too vulnerable.

‘You’re not fine,’ insisted Regina, trying to pull Emma back into her body heat. ‘You’re still freezing and we need to—’

‘I said I’m fine,’ huffed Emma, rising to her feet as she brushed the brunette off. ‘Stop making a fuss, woman.’
The dragon plopped herself down on the floor in front of Happy and wordlessly waited for her friend to finish making her meal.

Regina opened her mouth to speak, but Henry grasped onto her shoulder and gave it an insistent squeeze. The sorceress turned towards her son, who firmly shook his head as he silently warned her not to push Emma any more than she already had.

‘Very well,’ declared Regina, her tone filled with pain.

She rose to her feet and moved over to where David and Elsa stood. The sorceress thought it would perhaps be best if she did something of value with her time in order to push aside her confused feelings of being turned down rather harshly in her own opinion.

Henry made his way over to Emma and Happy before sitting down next to them. He and the exceed constantly glanced over towards Emma as she kept on staring at the pot that Happy was mixing together.

‘Ma, are you okay?’ Henry tentatively questioned, placing a hand on her knee.

Emma looked up at the brunette and briefly hesitated, but nodded her head. Forcing herself to smile, she patted Henry’s hand reassuringly.

‘Yeah, kid. Why wouldn’t I be?’

‘It’s just that you seem a little upset about what mom said. We were just teasing you.’

‘No, it’s not about the motion sickness,’ Emma shook her head. ‘I’m fine, kid. Honest.’

‘Honestly.’

‘Happy, I swear to the gods—’

Before Emma could finished her threat, Henry jumped at he chance to change the subject, even if his mother wasn’t as fine as she liked to lead on.

‘So, what is Happy making?’ inquired Henry, staring into the pot. ‘It looks like a bunch of trail mix thrown together with fruits and stuff.’

Happy nodded his head in agreement, ‘Aye, sir. It’s a special dish just for Emma.’

Out of his bag, Happy retrieved a box of matches. An odd symbol was written on the front, which meant fire in elvish. He opened the item and retrieved a single match before he dragged it against the side. A pure white flame burst forth before Happy dropped it into the pot. Instantly, the food caught on fire in an unnaturally fast manner. Orange, red and white tongues licked at the side of the pot, but it didn’t scorch the metal like one would expect.

‘Um...’ Henry frowned uncertainly, glancing between Happy and Emma. The latter grinned from ear to ear as she licked her lips excitedly.

Behind them, David, Elsa and Regina heard the strange sound erupting through the room and turned to see what they were doing. Comically, their eyes all widened at the same time as they watched in panic as the small fire burned inside the pot.

Regina was the first to react as she began to storm towards the three of them. All over her face, one could see the anger and shock radiating in layers.
‘Miss Swan, what the hell do you think—’

The sorceress never managed to finish the question. In fact, she was stunned into silence as she watched Emma bring the pot up to her mouth and began to chew on the flames inside.

Silence fell upon everyone, since no one could even think of what to say regarding the sight before them. The only sounds that echoed through the loft were the slurping noises Emma made as she consumed the pot of fire.

Gradually, the healthy color of Emma’s cheeks began to return to her and she could feel the fire coursing in her stomach and chest. In fact, she could feel the magic that had begun to course through her veins.

A satisfied smile made its way onto Emma’s lips after smacking them in delight. She set the pot down onto the ground, now completely empty. There wasn’t a trace of evidence that the ingredients were in it, let alone the fire that had been set inside a moment earlier.

At that moment, Mary Margaret came through the front door with her stroller. Her movements were panicked and anything but fluid. Before she could even think of rushing in which ever direction her daughter was in, she stopped dead in her tracks. The door shut with a soft thud as Mary Margaret watched everyone curiously.

‘What did I miss?’

* 

Three years.

That was how long Emma had actually been gone.

All of a sudden Regina understood why the blonde seemed as though she had matured, why she was more carefree and less emotional than she had last seen her.

Not to mention, Emma had went and gotten herself turned into a dragon.

Regina wanted to yell, scream, kick and slap, especially when Emma sat there thinking that there was nothing wrong with the fact that she had been jumping through time portals and technically left them and the town for that amount of time.

There was around a one-thousand and ninety-five day gap between them all and the person that currently sat in front of them in the kitchen chair whilst Regina, Henry and the two idiots squeezed together on the couch. Elsa stood off to the side to give the family some space, so that they could work through what Emma had just told them.

The blonde was practically an entirely new person. She no longer wore her red leather jacket that Regina had once found annoying but had come to secretly love. Now she had motion sickness and couldn’t stand the thought of a vehicle let alone drive it. Not to mention, Emma was essentially the most powerful sorceress in Storybrooke.

Hell, she is the most powerful magic user.

Regina had driven Emma so far away to the point that the blonde had jumped into time portals—as if she hadn’t learned her lesson at all—in order to stay away. That was Regina’s doing, and she couldn’t even begin to imagine the loneliness that the dragon must have felt in these past three years. Thinking that everyone would quite possibly be better off without her if she just stayed away.

It all went unsaid, but Regina liked to think she knew Emma because she knew herself.
‘Three years,’ Henry’s voice cracked slightly as he spoke, but he cleared it before continuing. ‘Wow, Ma. That’s—that’s a long time.’

The blonde shrugged her shoulders casually, like it didn’t bother her that much. ‘It’s not that I wanted to stay away. It’s... well, it’s because I had to. Being a savior means being a hero. That’s what I was doing: Being a hero.’

‘But... but three years, Ma,’ reasoned Henry, his eyes watering with emotion. ‘Didn’t you miss us? Didn’t you miss where you belong?’

‘Everyday,’ promised Emma. ‘Though, no matter how much you want something, it doesn’t always mean that it’s the right time for you to have it.’

‘Well, you’re home now, and that’s all that matters,’ David smiled reassuringly at his daughter despite the sadness that he himself felt. ‘This is where you belong and you don’t have to jump from realm to realm anymore to be the savior. You can stay with your family and do that.’

Regina didn’t miss the flash of guilt across Emma’s green orbs or the way her eyes briefly glanced in Elsa’s direction.

It was a tell.

Emma wasn’t telling them the whole story. There was more to this than just missing home and returning after the errands she had run for the gods were complete.

‘First, we have to help Elsa find Anna,’ informed Emma, hurriedly changing the subject.

‘Oh, oh,’ Henry stood up, unable to contain the excitement bursting forth in him. ‘Operation Olaf.’ Emma and Happy both frowned in confusion and Henry faltered slightly. ‘You know... like—like the snowman in Frozen... Okay, that’s going to be Operation Rehabilitation; Step one being a movie education. A movie-cation.’

‘Kid, all these different operations names are going to be giving me a headache,’ deadpanned Emma.

Despite the good hearted laughter and teasing amongst the family, Regina was painfully still aware of the possibility of Emma leaving again. What made it worse was that it was her fault she had left in the first place.

* 

They had a way to find Anna. For the first time in quite some time, Emma was light on her feet. Now with a goal to focus on and a reason to avoid Regina all together, the blonde had never felt better.

After three years, the pain was still fresh and it hurt even more to see Regina in the flesh and be reminded every second that everything was not going to work out. So, Emma did what she did best and cut her losses before they could hurt her anymore than they already had.

‘You did this.’

The ice wall was magnificent, even if it was built right around the town line and cut Storybrooke off from the rest of the world. Magic like this was rare, and though Emma had witnessed it in the future and past, she was never not amazed by it.

‘You might not totally control it, but this is amazing,’ informed Emma, glancing sideways at Elsa. ‘And unique.’
‘Aye, sir!’ exclaimed Happy, happily munching away at the fish trapped between his paws in the afternoon. In Emma’s opinion, he simply looked ridiculous, but she wasn’t going to have this conversation with him a second time.

‘I mean, this is kind of cool,’ Emma grinned sheepishly, displaying her canines. ‘Pun intended.’

‘Emma!’ whined Happy. ‘Don’t be incorrigible.’

‘Do you even know what that means?’

‘Aye, sir. It means that you’re incapable of change.’

‘...Smartass.’

Giggling at their antics, Elsa brought her hand up to her mouth to muffle the sound. She turned towards the barrier as a smile continued to play on her lips.

‘Well, regardless, there's no need for a barrier anymore. Let me take it down.’

Standing her ground, Elsa lifted both her hands as she prepared herself. It wasn’t long before the blonde’s hands shot forth a burst of ice magic. Before long the entire wall was beginning to collapse in on itself, the icicles sinking back into the ground. All that remained was the long tar road that led off into the horizon and away from Storybrooke.

‘That was so cool, Elsa!’ exclaimed Happy, floating until he could sit on top of Emma’s head. He simply continued on eating as he stared where the wall was.

‘Oh, so you get to make stupid jokes, but I can’t?’

‘Aye, sir.’

Emma rolled her eyes in exasperation, ‘Unbelievable,’ she sighed before turning towards Elsa. ‘Now that that’s out of the way, let’s go get some lunner. I’m bloody starving.’

‘We just ate,’ informed Elsa with a shock yet amused expression. ‘You couldn’t possibly be hungry once more.’

‘Dragon, remember?’

The queen merely shook her head. And for a moment Emma allowed herself to smile infectiously. Perhaps it wouldn’t be so bad whilst she was back in Storybrooke. Having a friend other than Happy could be a good thing until she had to leave once more.

With a wave of Emma’s hand, clouds of white smoke enveloped them both before they completely disappeared. Unbeknownst to them, they were completely oblivious to the puff of pure black smoke that suddenly appeared just in front of the town line.

The dress that she wore was a deep shade of a dark purple, and it clung tightly to her form. Though no one could see her feet below since the dress constantly flowed as if she was a ghost of some sort. The raven black hair that hung just below her buttocks moved around freely, like she was underwater. Her eyes shone a shade of a deep and dark blood red color. The woman’s skin was a deep dark cream color, much like most Greek’s and her lips red, plump and full.

‘Oh, this is going to be so much fun,’ the woman’s smirk reminded anyone who looked at it of someone who had gone completely and utterly mad.
Morphing into a spirit of some sort, the woman flew off into the air and began to head into the direction of Storybrooke.

The Enchanted Forest—Past: Year ???

The Ugly Duckling was roaring with laughter and shouts as the occupants inside drank their way well into several comas. It wasn’t exactly the most savory of places for the average fair maiden to find herself, but the establishment offered food and drink for its customers as well as a place to put their feet up and relax for a few hours.

The tavern was located in the East Woods of the Enchanted Forest in the trunks of several trees, hidden from whomever was not supposed to make acquaintance with the safe haven for ruffians and privateers.

Emma Swan’s boots were outright murdering her feet and her cloak constantly tangled with her legs, nearly causing her to trip and fall face forward onto the wooden floor. She was starving, to the point where it felt as though her stomach was beginning to consume her very being—given how much it was growling it might as well have been.

Perched on the blonde’s shoulder, Happy sat safely with a casual smile on his face. Even as a man flew directly out the window and another one lay on the ground by the door. Emma eyed this man with a raised eyebrow and then looked to her companion questioningly.

‘Are you sure we should eat here, little—’

Happy was quick to interrupt, ‘He’s resting.’

Emma pursed her lips and turned to look towards the—hopefully—unconscious man. To her, it felt as though this establishment wasn’t exactly "family friendly". Hell, she would never even consider bringing Henry to a place like this.

‘I am hungry,’ shrugged Emma. ‘And I’m too tired to set up camp. Why make food when there’s people who can do it for us?’

The exceed nodded his head in agreement, ‘Exactly!’ Happy smacked his lips and closed his eyes. ‘I smell chicken, and chimera, and—’

The savior shook her head in amusement. ‘Yeah, Happy. My nose works just fine.’

‘Oh good.’ Happy smiled mischievously. ‘I thought it might have stopped working given the fact that you were so hesitant to come in here.’

Emma growled softly, but dropped the matter. She began to maneuver her way through the rowdy crowd, dodging a punch or kick here and there. All of the tavern's occupants most definitely had an unsavory background of a sort, but Emma wasn’t going to let that deter her now. Not when she had made progress halfway to the counter.

Plopping down onto one of the stools, Happy took ownership of the seat next to hers. Given that everyone was either gambling, brawling or drinking with their mates at the tables on the far ends, no one actually wanted to occupy the counter.

The maiden listened intently, and scribbled furiously as Emma rattled off their order, adding an extra item when Happy piped up excitedly. Emma couldn’t blame the yellow furball. He was eager to "help" her with ordering their meal, so that eagerness managed to get the better of him more often than not.
It had been a long day to say the least. Athena’s quests generally required a little more IQ than the average intelligence, and Emma hadn’t exactly been Einstein when she had been in school. Oh, let’s not forget the hoards of monsters that somehow seemed to be around every corner. At times it felt like she was a homing beacon for trouble.

Inside her cloak, Emma retrieved a parchment. It was wrinkled from the amount of time she has folded and unfolded it, and it was littered in pencil markings. She placed it down on the counter and began to inspect it intently.

‘We’re a week’s travel from Agrabah,’ Emma informed as she blindly reached forward for the Ale that the barmaid held out towards her. Happy on the other hand graciously excepted a glass of milk. ‘When my magic’s working again we can get there in about half of that. We need to get out of this war zone before we get drafted into it.’ She grumbled as she brought the alcohol to her lips, ‘We’ve already made a mess by performing Athena’s quest. The timeline’s already so damn fragile.’

Happy set his now empty glass back down on the counter and turned to Emma, a milk mustache covering his furry upper lip.

‘I told you that the gold wasn’t worth it, but did you listen? No.’ The feline rolled his eyes and crossed his arms over his chest. ‘What do I know? I’m just a cat.’

‘Exceed,’ corrected Emma with the roll of her eyes. ‘And we got a lot more than just gold, little buddy. I don’t think a mortal has ever been given any amount of ambrosia, let alone the amount we were rewarded in.’

The exceed huffed, but nodded, ‘True.’ Happy rose to his feet. ‘I’m going to go gamble with about half of our gold. I’ll yell if the ruffians thinks I’m cheating.’

Emma scoffed, eyes still focused on the map stretched out in front of her, ‘You do cheat.’

Gasping, the feline pressed both of his paws to Emma’s lips. She snickered behind them and turned slightly towards her best friend.

‘Shh!’ He hissed. ‘They don’t know that!’

The blonde shook her head as her companion sprouted his wings and began to make his way through the crowded tavern. When she couldn’t see him anymore she refocused her attention on the parchment.

A cloaked figure sitting by the end of the counter rose to her feet and began to sashay towards her. Out of the corner of her eye, Emma paid extra attention to the way the woman swayed her hips. It was easier said than done to determine whether someone was a threat or not.

The woman stopped next to her, too close for what was appropriate and threw her hood back. Beneath the cloth Emma found a woman too divine to be human; eyes as red as blood and skin a dark tanned color. To the dragon, she would appear as someone from Greek descent. Her hair was flawless, long and a divine ebony color. She seemed to have a likeness about her, a glow around her outlining if you will.

She grabbed Emma’s attention instantly, making her ignore all the warning signs that flashed in the back of her mind.

‘Well, Hel-lo there,’ greeted Emma, offering a charming toothy grin. ‘I have not seen a woman like you in a place like this before. Did it hurt when you fell from heaven?’
The woman’s eyes flashed with mischief as she smirked, ‘It was Olympus, but what’s a name truly?’

Emma snorted and held her hand out, ‘I’m Emma.’

‘It’s a pleasure to meet you..., Em-ma,’ purred the woman. ‘I am referred to as Eris.’ The woman accepted Emma’s hand, her’s completely soft to the touch. ‘I have a feeling that we’re going to have so much fun.’

The blonde could have drooled then and there.

_Regina who?_
I Have Sexual Tension With A Goddess

Chapter Notes

You guys would not believe the writer’s block I had these past three days. I was quite honestly ready to take a hammer and smash both my hands, but luckily the muse struck.

One quick note: I noticed a comment about Eris being inspired by her version on the movie *Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas* and that is true. The movie was something that I watched and rewatched and then rewatched over and over again as a kid. I loved that movie. I loved Eris and her entire vibe so I thought, why not? I mean a bitch with a bad attitude to drive Regina crazy? What more could I want from life?

Anyways, onto the story.

Down the length of main street, Robin, Marian and Roland were out for a stroll. The thief was adamant on helping his wife adjust to the town of Storybrooke, seeing as this was their home and he wanted her to be as comfortable as possible.

Things with Regina had been strained and he missed her dearly, but he was trying his best to be a good husband to Marian. However, it was becoming increasingly hard with Emma Swan now back in town and Regina’s attention now no longer focused on him.

‘I know this town might seem strange at first, but you do get used to it,’ informed Robin, forcing his mind away from the thoughts that kept him up at night. ‘And Roland loves it here. He loves watching the boats at the harbor. Eating at Granny's.’

‘And ice cream,’ added Roland enthusiastically, glancing past his mother and up at his father.

Robin couldn’t help but allow the boy’s smile to infect him as well, ‘Yes. How could we forget about ice cream?’

‘Can we get some now, please?’

‘Well, I think your mother's seen enough strange things for one day.’

It broke Robin’s heart seeing Roland’s smile fall instantly.

In truth, the reason that he didn’t want to allow Roland to have the frozen treat was because ice cream was something that they had shared with Regina. He wanted to desperately hold onto those memories and not replace them so soon yet.

It had been about three months that Marian was back with them, but it was the first time that Robin had managed to coax her to come out of the forest and into town. His wife wasn’t keen to the dangers that lurked around every corner, ranging from Snow monsters to Cyclopses that ate people.

‘We should get back to the camp,’ informed Robin, trying to turn them around and head back into the direction that they had come.

Roland stopped in front of Marian as he tugged on her sleeve and stared up at her with enormous
pleading eyes.

‘Please, Mum,’ begged Roland. ‘Regina let me.’

Marian offered her son a weak smile before she nodded her head in agreement, ‘Sure.’

The brunette allowed herself to be tugged towards the ice cream with Robin following reluctantly behind them.

Unbeknownst to the family, a woman with raven hair and a flowing purple dress watched from the top of a building across the street. She went unnoticed by everyone walking down the street, just like she preferred. A twisted smile made its way on the woman’s lips and her eyes shone with mischief.

‘Such a lovely family: An unfaithful thief, a pure hearted maiden and an enthusiastic little child,’ her voice was rich and feminine, but had a dangerous lull in each sentence she spoke.

With a wave of her hand, a cone of ice cream appeared in her grasp. She stared at the frozen treat and practically giggled in excitement.

‘I pull out one building block and it all tumbles down into chaos. Glorious chaos.’ The goddess paused as she stared intently at the treat in her hand, a sick smile gracing her lips. ‘And she will come running back into my arms.’

The ice cream dissolved into smoke and the woman’s whole body morphed into a black spirit before disappearing into the shadows.

* 

Emma hated birthdays.

Well, specifically her own, but others came close to the unadulterated hate she felt for the 22nd of October.

Birthdays meant presents and parties where you were forced to mingle with people you didn’t actually like. Not that Emma ever had the privilege of her own birthday parties, but she was forced to attend the ones of her foster families’ real children.

According to Regina, Henry’s party had to be perfect without so much as a hitch to go off. It was safer to stay out of the brunette’s way whilst she planned it and even if this was the first birthday that Emma was actually able to attend she didn’t want to risk her life by offering any help in planning the celebration.

No, Emma just focused on finding Anna and making sure Henry’s present was ready, lest she wanted Regina to one again hound her for being a bad parent.

Things with the former Evil Queen were strained, perhaps even more so than ever before. Given that they hated each other in the beginning it was saying a lot. However, it was a different type of strained now. They bickered, yes, but for some reason Emma could tell that Regina was upset by it. Like she was feeling guilty for each harsh and insulting word that left her mouth. It wasn’t obvious and it took Emma a few days to pick up on it, but once she did it was clear as day.

‘Emma, are you even listening to me?’

The blonde’s head snapped over to Happy. For the past few minutes as they walked down the street from Gold’s shop, the exceed had been suggesting ways to both her and Elsa of what they could do to try and find Anna. He went on about different spells that they could try, but seeing as most of them were useful because they didn’t have a shred of DNA of the woman, Emma had begun to tune
‘Uh, yeah,’ muttered Emma. ‘Just a little tired today, s’all.’

‘A little? Emma, you seem positively exhausted,’ Elsa pointed out with a frown, stopping in front of the blonde. ‘Have you not been sleeping well?’

‘No, I’ve been sleeping just fine,’ reassured Emma. ‘It’s just ever since you took down the wall...’

The blonde trailed off and her attention began to slip away from her friends.

Happy floated off her shoulder so that they could now be face-to-face with one another. He took hold of Emma’s cheeks and forced her to glance at him. When the woman was now facing him, he proceeded to snap his fingers together. Emma’s eyes remained unfocused like some external force had a pull on her.

‘Uh-oh.’

‘“Uh-oh”? Why “Uh-oh”? What’s the matter with her?’ questioned Elsa worriedly, glancing in between Happy and Emma.

Happy took his small red backpack off his shoulders and began to rummage inside. He retrieved a golden cuff from inside then proceeded to strap it onto Emma’s wrist. The blonde took a step back and shut her eyes tightly. The blonde brought the back of her hand to her forehead as she stumbled.

‘Shit,’ muttered Emma when she came to her senses, shaking her head a few times. ‘This is bad.’

‘What is?’ repeated Elsa, frowning in concern.

Emma’s head shot up towards Happy, her eyes wild and a look of slight panic on her forehead. ‘You don’t think she—’

‘Well, this is Eris we’re talking about,’ deadpanned Happy. ‘And you were the one stupid enough to sleep with her.’

‘Hey!’

‘Who’s Eris? Will one of you please explain to me what is going on?’

The two companions shared a look with one another.

It wasn’t that Emma didn’t trust Elsa, but because she didn’t particularly like to talk about her less finer moments. As it were, sleeping with the goddess of chaos and discord counted as one of her less than finer moments.

To be fair, she was kind of seduced into it, but it wasn’t like she didn’t want to.

‘Eris, goddess of chaos and discord,’ began Emma, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘We’ve met many of gods and goddesses on our travels, and she was one of them. Now she’s here in Storybrooke.’

Elsa opened and closed her mouth in disbelief, like she didn’t quite believe Emma, but on the other hand she knew better than to question the dragon by now.

Finally, after a few moments of gawking at Emma and Happy, she finally settled on asking, ‘How can you be certain?’
'Well...’ Emma trailed off, a blush beginning to coat her cheeks. ‘She has a certain effect on me, if you will. We have a bit of a... um... complicated history.’

‘Oh?’ Elsa frowned in confusion. ‘I don’t think I quite understand what you mean?’

Pursing her lips, Emma glanced over to Happy who was staring at her with a look of disapproval. His paws were crossed over his chest as he narrowed his eyes at Emma. It was as if she was caught making out with a girl in the janitorial closet all over again. Only now, there was no punishment waiting for her at home, but only the possibility of disappointing her family.

‘We were... together.’

A beat passed. Then another.

‘Oh...’ Elsa’s eyes widened. ‘Oh. You and—’

‘Yes.’

‘As in—’

‘Yes.’

A deep blush colored Elsa’s cheeks and she hurriedly glanced away.

Emma wanted to laugh at the queen’s innocence. The woman had told that she had grown up sheltered but she didn’t think it would be this bad. However, there wasn’t any time to waste. If Emma and Happy were right, then a lot of people were about to die.

‘The problem is, she’s obsessed with me,’ sighed Emma. ‘Curse my ruggedly good looks.’

‘I think that you’re giving yourself too much credit, Em,’ informed Happy. ‘She’s a mass murdering megalomaniac. I wouldn’t be too flattered if I were you.’

Ignoring his jab, the savior took out her cellphone and began to dial her father’s number, ‘We need to warn everyone. She’s dangerous and she’ll do whatever it takes to get me back into bed with her.’

‘Which you unfortunately do. Every. Single. Time,’ Happy rolled his eyes. ‘Maybe you do need to get your head checked, Em. You have some weird fetish for women who are crazy.’

‘If this goddess is as dangerous as you say she is, then there is no time to waste,’ reasoned Elsa, finally looking back up at the two. ‘We must warn your parents immediately.’

‘They’re at mom’s first Fire-sight chat,’ Emma pointed out before taking her phone away from her ear and growling down at it. ‘Voicemail. Come on, it’s just around the corner, so we don’t have to teleport.’

‘Then what are we waiting for?’ inquired Happy. ‘An invitation?’

‘Happy, just—just—’ Emma pinched the bridge of her nose. ‘Just come on.’

Priorities, Swan. Crazy psychotic bitch first, then murder of your best friend.

* *

Saving Robin’s wife for the second time in the space of two weeks was not something that she had planned for that morning when she had woken up. In fact, she was quite happily sitting with Henry at the diner, discussing what he would like for his birthday when Robin had come rushing in looking
more panicked than she had ever seen him before.

As much as Regina hated Marian, she also knew what she meant to Robin and Roland, and how it would crush them both if she were to refuse helping them. So, Regina had agreed to come with her soulmate in order to aid saving his wife.

This was how Regina found herself entering her former office where David, Mary Margaret, August and Killian were watching over the unconscious woman on the couch.

Or as Regina liked to call them: The two idiots, Woody and Captain Guyliner or the Handless Wonder. Whichever insult sounded the best.

‘How is she?’ Robin questioned worriedly.

David turned away from the fire that he had just lit inside the fireplace, just as worried as the rest of them.

‘Not good,’ informed the prince. ‘She's getting colder.’

‘Regina,’ exhaled Mary Margaret, ‘thanks for coming.’

‘Don't thank me until I've done something,’ The former Evil Queen turned towards the pixie haired woman.

Mary Margaret was currently rocking Neal back and forth as she tried to soothe the little Charming. Behind her, Regina spotted the bird painting that she had never before seen in her office. She was quite certain that she possessed better taste than that.

‘Whose idea was that?’

Mary Margaret turned to look at what Regina was pointing at. ‘Oh, I thought I would put my own personal touch on the office.’

‘Well, you've succeeded,’ agreed the brunette as she turned to walk away. ‘Hideously.’

Robin glanced up at Regina from where he was kneeling next to Marian. ‘Is there anything you can do?’

The magic that suddenly overwhelmed her senses were unlike any she had experienced before. Not even Rumple’s gave off this kind of aroma. Not to mention it was making her quite nauseous by just being in Marian’s presence.

Regina sucked in a deep breath and swallowed down the bile that rose in her throat, ‘This is strong magic. I can't stop it, but maybe I can slow it down.’

Just as Regina was about to take another step towards the dying maiden, Emma practically stormed into the office. Her boots clicked loudly on the marble floor. Behind her, Elsa and Happy were hot on her heels.

‘Does no one answer their damn phones?!’ The dragon hissed. Her gaze shifted towards Marian. ‘What the hell happened to her?’

Regina narrowed her eyes at Emma before directing her glare towards Elsa, ‘Perhaps you should ask your new friend. After all, it was her monster that attacked Marian.’

‘Well, to be fair,’ interrupted Killian, wincing slightly before continuing. ‘We did provoke the beast.’
Happy floated over towards the couch and landed on its back as he stared down at Marian. The feline’s features contorted with worry and a mixture of fear and hesitancy.

‘Elsa didn’t do this,’ informed the exceed, glancing up at Regina. ‘It’s not your typical ice spell.’

Regina raised a mocking eyebrow in the yellow ball of fur’s direction and crossed her arms over her chest. ‘Oh, and you’re a magic expert?’

‘Yes, he is,’ informed Emma, walking around the couch so that she could kneel down next to Marian. ‘Why didn’t you guys call us? With how your magic has been acting, you could end up turning her into a frog instead of saving her.’

‘My magic is just fine, thank you very much,’ spat Regina. ‘I don’t need to tell you everything that I am doing.’

‘Sorry, mom,’ Henry spoke up, wringing his hands together nervously. ‘Ma’s got a point. You’re magic isn’t all too reliable right now.’

‘It is completely reliable,’ scoffed Regina. ‘Magic is merely different in this world, you know that. The rules aren’t the same here as they were in the old world. It will just take me some time to get used to it.’

Henry gave her an *Are you serious?* look and crossed his arms over his chest, ‘When you tried to water our daffodils with a water spell, they turned into *singing* daffodils that constantly belt out annoying tv commercials.’

‘I enjoy a good tune every now and then.’

‘What about our garden gnomes that shout insults at as whenever we pass them by?’

‘They help keep my wits about.’

‘You turned the Merc into a talking car that constantly complimented you on how soft your butt is,’ deadpanned Henry. ‘There are certain things that a son should never hear about his mother’s tushy.’

A deep blush covered Regina’s cheeks. The engine had failed to start and the brunette had no other option than to use a little bit of magic. It worked, obviously, but they were stuck with a perverted German car for a week until the spell had worn off.

Happy opened his mouth, no doubt to join in on the fun that Henry was poking at Regina, but soon found himself unable to speak when Emma conjured up a fish and shoved it into his mouth to prevent him from killing and dooming them all to centuries of damnation. Thankfully the others had the sense not to say anything.

‘Regardless,’ interrupted Emma before anything else could be said. ‘This wasn’t Elsa. It was Eris.’

All eyes suddenly sought out Emma, most of them filled with confusion.

‘Eris,’ repeated Robin. ‘Who is that?’

The yellow feline removed the haddock he had been fed from his mouth, grinning from ear to ear. Happy’s reaction caused an uneasy feeling to settle in Regina’s stomach.

‘Emma’s ex-girlfriend.’

‘She’s not my ex.’
‘Well, what would you call her?’

‘Not my ex-girlfriend. That’s for sure.’

‘Will the two of you please just tell us who this Eris woman is?’ Henry inquired, stopping the two of them from continuing their bickering.

The office door flew shut and a loud bang echoed through the office. Everyone jumped at the sudden sound and turned to look towards the cause of the disturbance.

Next, the fire suddenly went out and didn’t leave so much as smoke left. A dark aura began to befall the room and the occupants glanced around worriedly.

The woman with raven hair and flowing purple dress morphed from out the shadows. She appeared in front of the fireplace and leaned against the banister as she stared up at the chiseled steed above it.

Everyone turned their attention to the goddess. Fear and caution shone clearly in most of their eyes as they watched the goddess smile salaciously towards Emma. She took a step forward and Emma, in turn, to a step back. The savior bumped the back of her legs against the couch and nearly toppled backwards onto Marian.

‘My love,’ purred the goddess breathlessly. ‘It’s been far too long.’

‘Not long enough it seems,’ huffed Emma, looking like she was close to leaping over Marian and taking off towards the door. ‘Still as crazy as ever, I see.’

David pushed Mary Margaret and Neal behind him, like the rest of the room sensing the danger that pulsed off the woman in waves, but not quite understanding what was going on or how his daughter knew this woman.

‘Who the hell are you?’ hissed Regina, glaring at the woman with distain.

She didn’t appreciate the way the woman was practically undressing Emma with her eyes and given the blonde’s clothing, there wasn’t much to leave to the imagination.

A feeling that Regina was all to familiar with began to burn in her abdomen. Regina had experienced it too many a time with Robin Hood and Marian to be able to deny it.

It was jealousy.

The goddess turned to glance at Regina. Her blood red eyes etched away at the former queen’s bravado and filled her with uncertainty... and dare she say it... weakness. However, Regina was nothing if not the powerful tyrant she was well known as. If the others thought that she would be scared of the raven haired woman, then they immediately thought differently as Regina remained unmoving and fixed this newcomer with a look that could cut down armies.

‘Oh, how rude of me,’ smirked the goddess, sauntering closer towards Regina. ‘My name is Eris, goddess of chaos and discord. You may recognize my likeness on the temple walls.’

Eris held her hands out in a cross like manner and behind her a part of the room plunged into darkness. A mischievous smile graced her lips. The goddess brought her hands down and gave a soft chuckle.

She continued on her path towards Regina, her purple dress flowing behind her like a fog that was beginning to form. Stopping in front of Regina, Eris began to inspect the woman with just her eyes.
She scanned over the former queen’s body, tutting as if she were disappointed.

‘Not as impressive as I would have thought,’ mused Eris, turning away from Regina to glance over at Emma. ‘I expected much more of you, my love.’

‘Excuse me?’

Regina clenched her fists in an attempt to prevent herself from setting Eris on fire. She had no idea how powerful this woman was and if she were to attack blindly out of anger, then she could end up killing them all. This was dangerous ground they were treading on and what made it worse was Henry’s presence.

‘Leave them out of this, Eris,’ Emma requested, tone as cold as ice and hard as steel. ‘They have nothing to do with this. This is between you and me.’

‘Quite right,’ agreed Eris, stopping in front of Emma and giving her predatory smile. ‘Though you know that I do not particularly care to share your attention.’

Eris paused briefly, glancing her lover up and down. She leaned forward and placed her hands on Emma’s chest.

The raven haired woman then whispered seductively into her ear. ‘Em-ma.’

Regina watched in horror as the blonde actually shivered in pleasure, briefly closing her eyes and reaching up to wrap her hands over Eris’s.

It was like thinking of Robin and Marian kissing, only what she felt now was multiplied ten fold.

Regret, sadness and anger began to bubble up inside the former queen and the only reason why she hadn’t toss a fireball at the goddess was because she might catch Emma in the crossfire.

Then again, Emma was a dragon.

‘Get your slimy mitts off of Emma!’ spat Regina, lighting a fireball in her hand and taking a threatening step towards Eris.

The goddess vanished before Regina could even take aim. Her spiritual form bounced around the room before she appeared behind Henry. As the boy moved to turn around and face her, Eris brought up a dagger and pressed it firmly against his throat.

‘No!’ Emma and Regina cried out at the same time.

‘Eris, come on. This isn’t a game,’ pleaded the blonde. ‘Let my boy go.’

‘But I’m having so much fun,’ Eris smirked wickedly. ‘You’ll have the little rascal back in due time, but I want something in return.’

Emma clenched her fists for a moments in resistance but slumped when she came to the natural conclusion that she was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

‘What do you want?’

‘You are not to aid The Evil Queen or anyone else in resuscitating the lovely Maid Marian,’ informed Eris. ‘I have plans and I wouldn’t want you to interfere with it. It’s quite an unfair advantage for me, my love.’
‘And if I refuse?’

‘Then I slaughter the entire town.’

‘You’re mad,’ spat Emma. ‘Zeus wouldn’t allow such injustice.’

‘Well, dear old dad wouldn’t dare lay a hand on me. He’s invested in our future.’

A beat passed.

All Emma could do was glare at the raven haired woman before her, knowing full well that she couldn’t do anything but stand there.

‘Fine,’ hissed Emma. ‘However, I want your word as a goddess that you will not harm my family or anyone else, so long as I abide by your request; I won’t help save Marian.’

Eris smiled in delight before shoving Henry aside and into his grandfather’s awaiting arms.

Slowly, she stalked towards Emma, stopping just in front of the couch that separated them. Happy was quick to sprout his wings and fly away from the goddess to place as much distance between them as possible.

The goddess brought the dagger up to her left shoulder before she cut an X into her flesh. A beautiful blinding light seamed through the damaged skin instead of blood. Emma was forced to look away briefly before returning her green orbs to the goddess.

‘You have my word, Em-ma,’ assured Eris. ‘No harm shall come to your family or the inhabitants of this town, so long as you abide by my rules.’

The goddess turned her gaze towards Robin Hood, a mischievous smirk gracing her lips.

‘Don’t bother using True Love’s kiss, forest boy. You mustn’t try and kid yourself. You’d much rather bed The Evil Queen than your own wife. Her death will forever rest on your shoulders, you unfaithful thief.’

Eris smiled one last time in Emma’s direction.

‘Tata, my love. I count the seconds until our next meeting,’ she sighed dreamily before fleeing in her spiritual form out the chimney.

Just like that, the glass door of the office unlocked and flew open, the fireplace lighting once more as if it had never been put out. The room’s members stared in shock at one another at what had happened, most of their eyes finding Emma.

‘Eris might have told me that I can’t help Marian, but Happy can,’ informed Emma, not even sparing a minute for anyone to squeeze in a question. ‘Happy, stay here with Regina and help her with whatever she needs.’

‘What are you going to do?’ inquired the feline, not even arguing with his upset friend.

‘I’m gonna go find out what Eris is planning before it happens again.’

‘Emma—’ David tried to interrupt her, but the dragon disappeared in the wave of her hand. The man looked towards Mary Margaret, both staring at one another hopelessly.

‘She shouldn’t be alone right now,’ Henry informed, stating what everyone else was thinking.
‘She’ll go somewhere she can find information,’ Happy pointed out helpfully, landing on the back of the couch once more. ‘Eris’s plans are usually pretty predictable and they follow patterns. They’re also most likely written in a history book of some sort.’

‘The library,’ nodded David. ‘I’ll go.’
Pull Up Your Big Girl Pants And Fix It

Chapter Notes

I have no notes. You guys are all awesome and I appreciate all the love given to this story. I honestly did not think I’d get this much kudos. You guys make my heart swell!

The library was just as Emma remembered, newly refurbished, stocked with hundreds of books that could be helpful and Belle certainly looked the same as always. However, the red haired bookworm seemed a little sad. Perhaps the dragon was just imagining things, given that she herself was a little more than depressed, but she knew confusion and regret when she saw it. Right now the librarian practically reeked of it.

Several stacks of books were set out in front of Emma, as she herself had sat down at one of the tables in the farthest and secluded area of the library. Silence was golden when she had to look up on something and more importantly she wanted to hide away from the others for as long as possible to avoid talking about her and Eris. They would be keen on answers, but it was unfair that Emma would be forced to talk about something that she hadn’t even intended on ever mentioning.

It was during her first year she spent jumping from different eras in the past that she had met the raven haired goddess. She was mysterious and intriguing, and on some level she was the perfect replacement for Regina, or at least that’s what Emma thought. After a year of not seeing anyone she was familiar with, she grew lonely, even if she had Happy. Loneliness led from one thing to another and before Emma knew it, she found herself completing a few quests for Hera in order to get her hands on the magical cuff she now wore around her wrist to protect herself from Eris’s seduction.

Their relationship, if one could call it that, wasn’t all that horrible. It was amazing to experience the feeling of being wanted by someone in that way. Eris was also surprisingly easy to talk to, which Emma made the mistake of practically telling her everything. Perhaps that was part of Eris’s plan in order to keep the blonde under her utter control.

Suddenly, Belle dropped down several more books next to Emma, causing the dragon to practically leap from her skin. She turned to acknowledge Belle’s presence and the new books that had been brought for her use, only to find the redhead pulling out a chair so that she could take a seat next to Emma.

‘I think that this is everything I have in the archives,’ informed Belle, picking up one if the mythology books and setting it down in front of her. ‘However, you were rather vague and deliberately obtuse when you said that you wanted information about Greek Mythological gods. What is it that brought up the subject, anyways? Has something happened?’

‘Yeah, my crazy ex is the goddess Eris and she wants us to get back together again,’ informed Emma seriously.

Belle released a laugh, not looking up from the book in her hands as she continuously paged through it, ‘That’s a good one. I don’t think I’ve heard that before.’

‘That’s 'cause I wasn’t joking.’
Whipping her head towards the savior, Belle’s eyes widened in shock. For a moment she opened and closed her mouth like a fish on dry land.

That comparison brought a smile to her lips, her mind immediately causing her to think of Happy. Whenever she mentioned or even thought of fish, the small feline would somehow magically appear out of nowhere.

Right now, Emma wanted nothing more than to curl up on her bed and snuggle with the small creature. He would whisper reassurances in her ear, continuously patting her head in a soothing motion. Sometimes he would even prepare the both comfort food and they would eat until neither one of them could remember their own names let alone whatever reason she was depressed.

‘That’s... well, that’s quite a pickle you’ve gotten yourself into, isn’t it?’ questioned Belle, though her voice lacked any teasing or judgement. In fact the woman sounded concerned more than anything else. ‘Are you trying to find a way to stop her from coming after your affection?’

‘I was hoping that there would be something in the books here,’ explained Emma, sighing softly in frustration. ‘We’ve been playing this game of cat and mouse for over the past two years whilst I was away, and people always end up getting hurt.’

‘Yes, gods and goddess are quite... narrow sighted when they go after their latest conquest. Most of the stories I have heard are anything but pleasant.’

Emma shrugged her shoulders, not wanting to talk about the subject any more than she already had and will when the others find her. Hopefully their attention would be too wrapped up in saving Marian to worry about her at the moment. After all, Eris was her responsibility, not her family’s and definitely not Belle’s. Ruby would kill her if she were to drag the woman into her mess.

‘Listen, you don’t have to help me,’ informed Emma, looking up at Belle for the first time. She found soft blue orbs staring back at her and for a moment the blonde thought that she saw a flash of panic in them. ‘I can deal with this on my own. You’ve already done plenty.’

‘Well, I’m afraid that I’m not doing this just for you,’ informed the librarian, turning so that she was fully facing Emma. ‘I have a bit of an ulterior motive for jumping at the chance to help you.’

Belle bit her lip a little guiltily which drew a small chuckle from Emma. The flush that coated her cheeks and the fact that she could barely even live with herself for hiding her true motive from Emma was simply too adorable in her opinion and much too funny for the blonde to be upset. Besides, given that Belle was as innocent as they come, Emma was fairly confident that whatever her reason’s were, they weren’t cynical or villainous in any way.

‘Sure, nerd,’ teased Emma, smiling affectionately for the first time since she had set foot in the library. ‘What’s this ulterior motive you speak of?’

A blush coated her cheeks and she glanced away in embarrassment before somehow finding the courage to continue. ‘I wanted to ask how Ruby was doing? She left in such a hurry... and well, she never really said goodbye.’

Emma nodded, offering a brief sympathetic smile. Ruby left because she couldn’t stand watching Belle with someone like Rumplestiltskin, who didn’t even deserve a glance in his direction let alone that bright smile.

The dragon understood all too well why the wolf couldn’t even say goodbye. Hell, Emma hadn’t even bothered to leave Regina a note like Ruby had for Belle. She simply just dropped off the side of
the Earth in an attempt to forget the beautiful brunette.

‘She’s doing fine,’ Emma gave the best smile she could muster. ‘Just before I came back, she and Mulan were helping the King and Queen of Dunbroch get rid of a few pesky mercenaries. The wolf’s having a blast if you ask me.’

Emma could tell by the way that Belle’s smile faltered, she was trying not to be upset that Ruby was moving on from her life in Storybrooke, that she was moving on from Belle. However, the red head failed miserably no matter how hard she tried to hide it.

‘So, she’s okay? She’s—she’s happy?’

‘Not as happy as she was when you were in her life,’ answered Emma, her tone sad. ‘Ruby misses you and everyone else so much, but she’s just too stubborn to admit it. I did make her promise to come visit, though. And I’m certain she will.’

This put a smile back on Belle’s face and the dragon couldn’t help but be proud that she had accomplished cheering the red head up. After all, Ruby had made her promise to keep an eye on Belle and take care of her. The wolf never trusted Rumpelstiltskin, not with someone as pure hearted as Belle. Emma understood her concern and would be damned if she let anything happen to the librarian under her watch.

The moment shared between the two friends were interrupted when David stepped into the room. Both women glanced in his direction. For a moment the blond stopped in order to take in his daughter. All of Emma’s sadness and fear came rushing back into her.

Sensing that father and daughter needed a moment, Belle hurriedly excused herself. The red haired woman walked past David, giving him an encouraging smile before she disappeared through the entrance. The prince tentatively approached Emma and took a seat beside her. Her eyes followed his every move, making him even more nervous than he already was.

‘You can’t just take off like that, Emma,’ began David. ‘That isn’t how things work around here.’

Emma wanted to laugh despite the situation. Her father was definitely not one to beat around the bush.

‘You have to tell me—us what is going on. Emma, I’m your father. Please, talk to me, because I don’t know what to do if you don’t.’

Taking a deep breath, she briefly broke eye contact with her father. The guilt and shame began to overwhelm her as she toyed with the golden cuff around her wrist.

‘On my first year away, I met Eris during the Trojan war in the Enchanted Forest. I was doing a quest for Athena at the time. We hit it off—she seduced me... and from then on I’ve been trying to avoid her as much as possible, but somehow we always end up together from where we started. However, in the process people die due to her manipulation so that she could get me into her bed.’

It was the first time that Emma had to admit all of that out loud. Happy lived with her through it and they never really talked about it. Mostly since she thought him too young to understand what she was going through.

Eris never outright forced Emma, but she never really had much of a choice either. She was either emotional or she saw no other way to stop Eris from causing even more harm than she already had. Perhaps it was pointless now to resist Eris, and the only way to stop her was to give the raven haired woman what she wanted, no matter how disgusted Emma was with herself.
David placed a soft hand on his daughter’s shoulder and she nearly broke down sobbing at the tenderness. Emma glanced up at the blond through her tears, her lip trembling slightly.

‘Emma, none of this is your fault. You’re being too hard on yourself.’

‘I screwed up,’ Emma gasped out, rising to her feet. ‘I should never have come back. Then none of this would be happening—’

In one swift movement, David was out of his chair and pulling Emma into a fierce hug. The man couldn’t stand hearing his daughter say that she shouldn’t have come back after being away for three years. She was where she wanted to be and he would be damned if he let some goddess make her doubt her decision to come home.

Emma leaned into his embrace, tucking her face into his chest as she sobbed. She could feel her father’s hand coming up to cradle the back of her head, his heartbeat beneath her cheek as her tears soaked his shirt.

For the first time Emma actually thought that everything would work out. This one simple show of affection and comfort reassured her that they would make it out to the other side.

‘It’s okay,’ whispered David, his voice filled with a tenderness as though he was scared of frightening the wild animal in his touch. ‘She’s not going to win, Emma. We’re going to stop her.’

* *

This wasn’t anything new to Happy. Eris cursing people in order to get something that she wanted. That something being Emma.

Though a freezing spell was something new and entirely drastic. No amount of experience with magic would be able to help save Marian or amount of fish they offered to the gods in exchange for her safety.

Like always, Eris meant business and she was going to remove every obstacle in her way. For some reason Marian was just that. The yellow feline could even begin to understand why that could be or what part she could play in the future, but he knew that if he could save her he would be ultimately sparing his partner a lot of pain.

Happy released a frustrated sigh, his paw resting on Marian’s forehead as he stood next to her on the couch. The spell was strong and was continuing through her body faster than he and Regina could slow it down.

‘The curse is making its way towards her heart and once it touches she is going to die,’ explained Happy, not once looking at Regina and Robin who hovered behind him. ‘Eris must really want her dead.’

‘Is there nothing you can do?’

Robin was begging, practically pleading figuratively on his knees, but as much as Happy wanted to help, there wasn’t a chance to save her in time. Most of Eris’s curses could only be undone by the woman herself.

‘Eris’s magic is old, ancient even,’ informed Happy grimly. ‘Not even Emma can break most of her spells. It’s why she wears that golden cuff whenever the goddess is around to prevent herself from being affected by Eris’s seduction. If we want to save Marian then we need Eris to break the curse or
we need the help of another god or goddess.’

‘I don’t suppose you and Emma have a favor that you can collect from them?’ questioned Regina sarcastically.

Happy shook his head, oblivious to her bitter demeanor, ‘We used up the last one, I’m afraid. When Hera turned Emma into a cow and we had to ask Zeus to turn her back.’

‘Why am I not surprised?’

Now the yellow feline understood why it was so hard for Emma to talk about her relationship with Regina. The brunette was kind and caring like Emma had told the exceed countless of times, but when she was emotional or felt that she needed to protect herself, she was cold and cruel.

Happy frowned slightly, thinking of how this was particularly Regina’s fault. If Emma wasn’t so heartbroken then she would have never fallen into Eris’s clutches so easily.

‘Maybe there is something I can do?’ suggested Regina, turning towards Robin. ‘But only if you trust me, completely.’

‘I do,’ informed Robin easily.

‘I don’t mean to interrupt this romantic moment between lovers,’ Happy piped up, slightly annoyed with Regina and Robin, ‘but unless you’re going to take out her heart, I doubt that there is anything you could do.’

‘Then, it’s a good thing that that is exactly what I am going to do.’

* Robin had left to bring Roland to Little John. Henry had gone off to fetch one of her enchanted boxes to keep Marian’s heart safe and sound. Now the only people left in the room was Marian, Regina and Happy. Oddly, Regina was relieved that the thief had gone so that she could now actually be alone for the time being, with the unfortunate exception of Happy.

Currently, the feline had relocated himself to stand in front of the fire. Happy held out his paws towards the flames, taking a small break from using his magic to help prevent Marian’s death. Even if he himself had trained alongside Emma, his magical energy wasn’t yet that strong that he could keep up with a sorceress like Regina.

There was a tense silence in the room and whilst Regina preferred not to talk with the odd creature at all, she simply couldn’t understand the reason behind Happy’s unjust disliking of her. She didn’t particularly care for the feline. Regina found him annoying to begin with and several recipes of exceed stew came to mind, but seeing how the little creature was someone Emma was fond off, she was going to have to overcome the urge of killing him.

That meant she was going to have to talk to him.

‘So, you and Emma must have learned a lot during those three years,’ began the brunette tentatively, glancing over at Happy. ‘Anything particularly interesting that comes to mind?’

Happy turned around to face Regina, frowning slightly at the woman in confusion. He sprouted his wings before he flew up into the air, landing on the coffee table and crossing his legs.

‘You don’t strike me as the kind of person to make small talk, Miss Regina.’
The sorceress shook her head, releasing a sigh of frustration. It seems that he must have somehow inherited Emma’s ability to read her as well, because there was no other way that he would have picked up on that.

Happy couldn’t possibly be smart either. Given that he didn’t know the golden rule to not insult her.

‘Well, no, I am not.’

‘So, then what do you really want to ask?’ Happy tilted his head to the side. ‘If Emma’s okay? If she still needs your help? The answer is, no. She’s not okay and she doesn’t need you. We’ve been doing pretty good for the past three years and we’ll continue to do so many more. She doesn’t need you if you’re just going to continue hurting her.’

Regina pursed her lips.

She takes it back. Happy is a complete fool.

‘Tread lightly, whiskers,’ hissed Regina. ‘I do not stomach blundering idiots who think it is their right to speak their minds without encouragement. You would do well to keep your opinions of that which you do not understand to yourself, for your safety as much as my moral standing in this world.’

‘I’m not a kitten,’ informed Happy stubbornly. ‘And you’re not my mother, so you can’t scold me and expect me to do as I am told. You hurt Emma, that is all I need to understand. You’re the reason she left Storybrooke and you’re the reason Eris was able to trick her. It’s all your fault.’

The sorceress gaped at the small feline and for once she found herself entirely speechless. As much as she wanted to deny everything, she knew that she couldn’t.

Regina had been unusually cruel to Emma and in return had driven her off. Now the blonde could barely be in the same room with her because that pain was now seeping through.

Oh, Regina.

You gods-damned fool.

‘What do you expect me to do?’ Regina hissed, unable to say anything in her defense.

Regina had took her misplaced anger and bitterness and took it out on Emma because she was the easiest target. Now Regina might have just lost the one person who actually knew something about the feeling of being abandoned.

‘Pull up your big girl pants and fix it,’ huffed Happy, standing in order to hop off the table. ‘Or stop messing with her head and leave her alone. She needs to be in the right mindset if she wants to beat Eris. One slip up, just one and she’ll jump right back into Eris’s arms, even if she doesn’t want to.’

Enchanted Forest—Past

They were going to die.

She had survived a trip through a magical wardrobe, living 28 years in the Land Without Magic, a trip to the Enchanted Forest via the Mad Hatters Hat and countless other trials only to be cut down on the age of twenty-nine by one pesky bull with a species crisis.

There was still so much to do, to live for. Like grilled cheese, and...

Emma couldn’t really think of anything besides Granny’s sandwiches, but wasn’t that reason enough
to live for?

The blonde yelped as the minotaur tossed its axe her way. She stood onto her tiptoes and attached herself to the wall of the maze just before the large axe forced her to spread her legs. As she stared at the weapon now sticking out of the wall she came to the realization that the item had nearly split her in half.

Looking up, Emma realized that there was no time to reminisce in the way her life flashed before her eyes. Doing as Mulan had taught her, the blonde leapt forward and rolled out of the way. Another weapon, a flail, tore into the wall where she had stood a moment earlier and split the rock slab.

She glanced between the weapon and the large monster that had the height of all three companions combined. He didn’t seem to care about the fact that he had nearly taken her head off and more focused on the fact that he hadn’t. The minotaur huffed through his nose and then dragged his foot onto the ground as he prepared to storm.

Mulan and Ruby were still a few feet behind the beast, trying to pick themselves off the ground. Emma tightened her grip on her sword’s hilt and glanced down at her reflection. She was a mess, but she could see the hint of excitement gleaming in her eyes. She felt like she had gone insane, but the thrill of it all was making her heartache ease the smallest amount.

Sizing up the minotaur, Emma quickly felt for the exceed egg in her travel pack. When she made certain that it didn’t suffer any damage, she took a deep breath.

How hard could it be?

She was a savior, a hero. What did a one thousand pound monster have on an unhinged, heartbroken idiot like her? She didn’t have anything to lose now, and she had nothing better to do than eliminate the threat in front of her.

Emma release a bloodcurdling scream as she charged forward, attaching both of her hands to the hilt of her weapon. The minotaur roared furiously up into the air and followed her example, its hooves clicking on the stone tiles of the maze’s vein.

The beast swiped towards her with his large arm, but Emma slid onto her knees. She began to slide underneath its legs. Barely gaining her balance as she leapt to her feet, she stopped just behind him. Emma turned to face her opponent and took the opportunity of his back towards her. In one swift movement the savior rammed the tip of her sword into the tall beast’s lower back where it came out directly through its stomach.

An agonizing roar tore through the minotaurs throat.

‘Whoa!’ Ruby exclaimed from where she stood. Mulan was hold her up by allowing the she-wolf to place her arm around her neck. Now she clung to her like deadweight. ‘Go Emma!’

Her praises were sung too soon.

The minotaur took off with a great speed whilst Emma had no choice but to clung to the wounded enemy. If she let go, she would be without her sword and thus she would be defenseless. However, could it be a worse fate than what was about to happen?

Feeling like a flag in the wind, Emma did her best to hold onto the hilt of her sword as the minotaur tried to claw at his back or at the tip sticking out of his gut. With her, he tried to ram into every wall merely for the purpose of trying to swat the pesky fly that stubbornly attached itself to his back.
Mulan and Ruby had to dive out of the way as the creature ran the length of the corridor up and down. Emma could barely even see what their expressions looked like because her brain had currently taken up the task of bouncing around in her skull.

If Emma didn’t do something soon, she was going to either end up barfing her guts all over the floor, or she was going to die by being crushed by a man crossed with a cow. It was difficult to determine which option was more pathetic or which one Ruby wouldn’t allow her to live down.

They were both tied quite closely.

Having no other choice, Emma maneuvered herself so that she could support her legs against the back of the creature as she clung to her sword. From her thigh, she removed a small dagger from its scabbard and then flung herself into the air. She grabbed onto the minotaur’s thick neck with her one arm and then rammed the weapon directly into its throat. The minotaur stumbled a few paces, then dropped to its knees. With one final movement it crashed onto the maze’s cold floor, dead.

Emma scrambled off the beast’s corpse, immediately reached for her travel pack. She yanked the top open to reveal the exceed egg safe and sound. Blowing out a relieved breath, she shut the top once again and threw the bagged onto her back. The savior turned to where Mulan and Ruby were finally back onto their feet, each looking as out of breath and tired as she felt.

‘Didn’t Hercules kill this thing already?’ Emma jabbed her thumb towards the downed beast, her chest heaving as her lungs screamed for oxygen.

‘Theseus, but who truly cares about history anyways?’ Ruby questioned sarcastically.

Mulan frowned at the she-wolf, ‘Those who do not wish to repeat the mistakes of their forefathers.’

Emma chuckled softly as she pulled her sword from the minotaur, then sheathed it into the scabbard attached to her travel pack and then the dagger in its own rightful place.

‘I think she was joking, Mulan,’ teased Emma.

A blush coated the warrior’s cheeks, visible even with in the dim lighting of the torches. ‘Oh, my mistake.’

Emma placed her hands on her hips and looked between her friends and the monster, ‘So, uh, how many more monsters do we have to face before we reach the heart of this "labyrinth"?’

Ruby shrugged her shoulders, ‘They pop up in this maze like daises, Em.’

The blonde’s shoulders shagged as she blew put a frustrated breath. Bringing her hand to the back of her neck, Emma grumbled, ‘Fantastic.’
Good morning, dearies.

I have a few notes. I noticed a comment about Regina being a second character to Emma’s story. Thank you for mentioning that, they will definitely be sitting down and talk about things in a couple of chapters, but I don’t want to spoil anything.

I also noticed a comment if a magical cufflink could work on Eris. That is a good idea and I will see if I can use it in a few chapters. Especially since there’s brownie points in it if Regina has to watch.

Jeesh, and I thought that I was an evil mastermind. Eris would be so proud!

Granny’s was buzzing with excitement, music playing just loudly enough in the background so that one could consider the celebration an actual party. A large banner hung in the middle of the diner. In big and bright blue was painted the words:

Happy Birthday, Henry!

It had taken Emma and Happy a full hour to make it and several banners had taken the brunt of their shenanigans, seeing as the exceed enjoyed painting over the dragon’s work and/or painting her instead of the banner.

David, Mary Margaret and Neal, and Elsa came home from the store with supplies for the party to find the two of them covered in paints of all colors and parts of the living room and kitchen as well.

Despite the looming threat of the goddess, everyone was putting their feet up and sitting back for the evening. Searching through the woods and scouring every book only did so much good if the people doing it was well rested and on high alert. For one night, especially for Henry, the hatchet could be buried, even if it wasn’t in Eris’s skull.

With the traditional Happy Birthday song being sung and candles having been blown out, everyone was free to mingle and eat the food that was provided. The atmosphere was filled with laughter and conversation never seemed to run out.

At the main table, The Charming’s along with The Mills’s, Emma, Happy and Elsa were all seated. The birthday boy had been working his way through the presents that his family had gotten him. Even Happy had provided the boy with a gift wrapped fish. Even if it was a little odd, Henry had happily accepted the gift, ruffling the hairs on Happy’s head with an enormous smile.

Emma had missed this.

She missed family dinners, missed the laughter shared between them. She had forgotten how good it was and the sense of belonging she felt when she were in all of their presence. For one night she could forget all her worries and all the bad things in the past. Being able to share this with Happy made it so much better too.
‘My turn!’ exclaimed Emma, plopping down a small box in front of Henry.

It was gift wrapped in red wrapping paper with a yellow bow stuck on the top. The box was roughly the size of a jewelry box. Henry eagerly tore into his present, reaching the black box underneath it. When he lifted the lid he discovered a pair of black framed reading glasses. For a moment the boy frowned in confusion, lifting the item for everyone to see.

‘Um, thanks?’

Emma chuckled lightly in amusement, ‘Calm down, kid. I wouldn’t get you a phony present. It’s gale reading glasses.’

‘What do they do?’

‘They’re so cool!’ Happy piped up excitedly. ‘They allow you to read books at a rapid pace. It’s the only way Emma could ever have learned so much about magic in such a short time.’

Regina frowned in confusion, looking up at the blonde, ‘I’ve never heard of such a magical item.’

‘That’s because they only exist in the future,’ informed Emma with a shrug of her shoulders.

She reached over the table to steal a fry from David’s plate. Either he didn’t notice or he didn’t mind, because he allowed her to reach for several more.

‘Trust me, kid. It’s gonna be big. If you’re anything like me, they’ll be coming in pretty handy when you have to study for school.’

‘Okay!’ interrupted Regina. ‘Magic is not to be used as a shortcut when it comes to your education. I think that we can both agree that these gale glasses are only to be used for when he wishes to broaden his knowledge for entertainment. Not so that he can cram in all his work one day before a test.’

Henry chuckled at the reprimanding look his mother was giving Emma instead of him. He watched as Emma simply smirked at Regina, placing her hands behind her head as she leaned back in her chair.

‘I’ll agree with those terms,’ reassured Henry, placing the glasses back down in the box and shutting the lid. ‘Thanks, ma. I love it.’

‘Sure, kid,’ nodded Emma, reaching next to her to ruffle the boy’s hair. ‘I had to make it something pretty darn cool if I wanted to top Regina’s, right?’

‘You didn’t “top” my gift, Miss Swan,’ scowled Regina, narrowing her eyes at the blonde even more. ‘Henry will need a college fund much more than he will need those ridiculous glasses.’

Emma rolled her eyes at the jab, but said nothing as she straightened herself in her chair.

Nothing had changed where their relationship was involved and they weren’t exactly on speaking terms. Which was good in Emma’s opinion. The less reason Eris had to be jealous, the better. Not to mention the less pain Regina caused her, the less chance there was for Emma to seek solace from the woman who had a pull on her.

No, it was better if Regina continued to be the strict parent that made the disciplinary decisions, and carried on helping her soulmate revive his wife. Emma would continue being the fun parent that made sure Henry had a childhood, and carried on searching through books with Belle on information
she could use against Eris and helping Elsa find her sister.

‘So, Henry. Fourteen’s a pretty big number,’ David pointed out, trying to steer the conversation away from the bickering mothers. ‘I’d say that you’re old enough to start dating.’

‘Over your dead body,’ Regina interjected quickly before her son even had a chance to respond. ‘He’s twelve. And he will always be twelve.’

The occupants around the table winced at Regina’s words. Henry suddenly wished that he had a tortoise’s shell so that he could crawl inside and never come out. David blew out a nervous breath, his plan on erasing the tension had just backfired stupendously.

‘I’m not really that interested in girls right now, gramps,’ informed Henry. His tone was reassuring and caused Regina to blow out a relieved sigh. ‘I just wanna focus on school work and help beating the newest bad guy.’

‘Is that right?’ Emma chuckled teasingly. ‘I think you better leave this one to me, kiddo. Eris isn’t the kind of person that you would want to upset. She likes me and has made my life hell for the past three years.’

‘Yeah, but that’s because you don’t know how to handle women,’ informed Happy as a matter of a factly. ‘You’re not exactly the person I would trust to deal with a situation delicately, Emma.’

‘Why you little—’

‘Emma,’ reprimanded Mary Margaret gently. ‘Let’s not pick a fight with one another on Henry’s birthday. Granny isn’t going to appreciate it if we repeated the paint incident here in the diner.’

Pouting, the savior crossed her arms over her chest, biting the inside of her cheek.

That cat is a dead mammal walking.

Across the street from Granny’s diner, Eris morphed out of the shadows and stood on top of one of the buildings. She smiled wickedly, her blood red eyes falling onto Emma. The goddess watched as her former lover laughed alongside with her family, stealing glances of Regina now and then. They were all unaware of her presence, because if they were they surely wouldn’t be having such a wonderful celebration.

‘Oh, just look at them,’ exhaled Eris dreamily. ‘The fools actually think that they’re safe from me for tonight. Like I would allow them rest whilst I am denied mine. That will change soon enough. Especially if I everything goes according to plan.’

A snow flake fell down from the sky above and Eris reached out to catch it. However, before it could land in her palm it began to hover just above it. When she blew on it, it became solid ice, keeping the pattern of its snow flake. As Eris dropped it onto the ground, the once star lit skies quickly became covered in dark, grey clouds. The snow fall that followed afterwards was quite unusual for typical weather in the fall.

‘Do be gentle, darling,’ requested Eris. ‘Wouldn’t want to break our deal with Emma, would we?’

Lightning flashed in the clouds, the outline of an enormous bird-like creature appearing in he light. As thunder crashed, a roar tore through the night sky.

Time seemed to stop in the diner. All form of laughter ceased, Granny was quick to retrieve her crossbow in the same motion that she had switched off the jukebox and everyone at the Charming’s
table all rose to their feet, food and drinks forgotten. The pleasant atmosphere quickly morphed into one of pure tension when another roar tore through the quiet town of Storybrooke.

It could mean a number of things, reasoned Emma.

Usually monsters waited at least the span of a week before they attacked, and seeing as Eris had just attacked a day or two ago and Marian was still very much in stasis, there couldn’t possibly be a new threat already? Surely they were allowed a night off?

Then Emma remembered her bad luck and how she was a magnet for danger.

She must have done something pretty bad in her past life to be punished so badly in this one.

‘Calm down, everyone,’ stated Emma, loud enough for the people within the diner to hear her. ‘Stay inside and do not panic. It might only attract whatever is out there.’

Whilst everyone seemed restless, they at least had the good mind to listen to Emma. Given that they knew from experience that the Charming’s usually knew what to do in a moment of crisis.

‘Stay here,’ ordered Emma, not bothering to look at the occupants of the table as her eyes were focused on the outside of the diner. ‘Happy and I will be back soon.’

‘If you think I’m allowing you to just waltz out there alone,’ scoffed Regina, narrowing her eyes at Emma, ‘after what happened with the cave in? You must be dafter than I thought you were.’

‘I’m coming too,’ informed David, leaving no room for an argument.

‘Whatever,’ Emma huffed, stepping away from the table just as Happy obediently landed on her shoulder. ‘Just don’t get in my way when your magic starts acting up. Elsa, you can come too if you want.’

Outside it was too cold, even for Storybrooke, Maine. Their breaths steamed into the night air as the snow floated down to the earth below. The street had begun to ice over and Emma and Regina had to walk carefully on the slippery tar in order to avoid losing their balance. Even for winter time in Maine, this weather would be unusual.

Even if Regina was still dressed in a warm coat, she shivered.

David’s leather jacket also did nothing to shield him from the temperature that continued to drop by the minute.

It wasn’t the first time that Emma and Happy had experienced something like this. With the cold also came an unspeakable horror that they would rather avoid than face in that moment. Emma glanced over to her exceed, sharing a look with one another that confirmed they were thinking along the same lines.

‘Keep your eyes open,’ warned Emma. ‘I have a bad feeling about this.’

The savior’s eyes turned into slits, allowing her to see farther and spot the slightest of movement much more than with human eyesight.

‘Aye, sir,’ agreed Happy, bobbing his head up and down.

For a long time, no one heard anything unusual. Their breathing being the only sounds echoing into the night. It was far too quiet for anyone’s liking, and perhaps it was just because of the cold that
nothing would come out in the night.

Unbeknownst to them, an outline of something moved through the skies. It left behind a trail of pure white snow flakes as they began to drop down to the earth below. The creature continued to move with silence and precision, not even making a sound when it flapped its wings.

What the small group assumed to be hours, were only a few minutes in reality. Their nervousness causing their hearts to race and their adrenaline putting them more on edge than they already were. They might not be craving any sort of conflict now, but they almost wished for it just to get rid of the energy that built up in their bodies.

Everyone nearly leapt from the skins when the door to the diner suddenly slammed open, the bell chiming loudly into the nearly empty streets. Henry came raising out of Granny’s, a look of pure curiosity on his face. No one could blame the teenager for his curiosity. It was simply in their nature to ask questions and discover things on their own.

However, Emma blamed him. She definitely blamed the stubborn kid and Regina for raising him to be so boar headed just like the mayor herself.

‘Henry, get back into the diner,’ ordered Regina, not leaving any room for argument.

Though argue the boy shall try.

‘I want to help,’ informed Henry, his tone innocent enough that Emma would have agreed if she didn’t possess a brain.

‘Kid, go back inside before I hang you by your toes on the—’

She didn’t get to finish the threat.

A roar tore through the sky, now much clearer. To the ear one could clearly make it out to be the sound of an eagle, except much louder and somehow furious. They all turned their heads towards the source, spotting an enormous bird like creature coming straight towards them. It was roughly the size of the Jolly Roger, it’s body as white as snow and its irises a sickly red in a sea of yellow. Before they could even react the snow creature took on a burst of speed. It swooped down and in its giant claws scooped up Henry.

Truly, it shouldn’t have surprised Emma. After all the large bird had the same capabilities of a chameleon. It was able to change the coloration of its feathers so that it could blend into its surroundings. The bird was also as silent as it was deadly. One didn’t see the attack coming until it was too late.

Much like right now.

*If he survives this. I’m gonna kill him.*

The enormous bird began to fly into the direction of the harbor, no doubt heading towards the open sea to look for somewhere it could start to make its nest. If Henry was lucky, the owl wouldn’t drop him.

‘Henry!’ Regina called out in panic, her eyes widening in horror.

‘You have got to be kidding me right now,’ hissed Emma furiously.

‘*Do something, Miss Swan!*’
The dragon rolled her eyes. It wasn’t like she wasn’t worried for Henry’s safety. She definitely was. However, she knew that if any harm were to come to the boy then the deal Eris made with her would be over. The goddess was many things but she was no fool and wouldn’t do something so reckless that would endanger her chances of getting what she wanted. That meant that the raven haired woman was up to something.

‘Dad, you, Elsa and the deputies head to the loft. This is a distraction. Eris has to have some sort of motive if she sent one of her pets here to this realm,’ ordered Emma.

Happy sprouted his wings before flying off her shoulder as the woman began to shrug off her waistcoat.

‘What are you and Regina going to do about Henry?’

Her father was concerned, like he had every right to be for his grandson, but it she needed him to do as he was told if she wanted this to work out the way she wanted it to. Whatever Eris wanted, it was most likely going to be at the loft.

‘We’re going to go after them,’ informed Emma reassuringly. ‘But I need you to do as I say or Eris is going to get what she wants out of this.’

Briefly David nodded his head in agreement, grabbing Elsa’s wrist and tugging her along before he made his way back towards the diner with the ice queen hot on his heels. Emma trusted David to do his part whilst she, Regina and Happy were about to do theirs.

Regina gripped onto Emma’s elbow, her fingernails digging into the blonde’s flesh, but would thankfully not be able to pierce the skin. The dragon looked sharply into the russet eyes that she adored so much. Now, however, Emma couldn’t stand to look into those sad questioning eyes.

‘What’s the plan?’

It was that easy. No insults, no criticism, no hesitation. Just like it had been after they had returned from the Enchanted Forest. Before Robin came and screwed everything up.

‘Now, we get ready for a fight,’ informed Emma, gently slipping from Regina’s hold. The dragon walked a few paces so that she stood in the middle of the street before she got down on all fours.

‘You might want to stand back,’ Happy pointed out, prompting the brunette to heed his words.

Regina wanted to scoff at the ball of yellow fur’s request, but Emma chose that moment to begin her transition. Pure white smoke enveloped the blonde and out of it began to rise the body of an enormous reptile. The dragon rose her head high, reaching the height of the clocktower in the middle of the town. Regina had to duck her head when Emma’s tail swung over her head, nearly knocking her over.

The woman wanted to scold the beast, but anything she had wanted to say was suddenly lost on her.

In her dragon form, Emma was simply magnificent, beautiful even. She bore a golden mane, much like her human self, but the beast possessed no curls whatsoever. It reached across her back and stopped at the end of her tail. In between the hair she adorned two horns that reached back and curled slightly at the ends. Her leathery skin was a dark red color and the skin on her neck and underbelly a grayish-creamy color.

Emma moved uncomfortably, her feet dug into the tar road and cracked under her weight. The dragon shook her head and attempted to rid herself from spots that appeared in her vision. Once she
had collected herself, her green eyes shot over to where Regina was still gaping at her like a fish out of water.

The dragon rolled her eyes and huffed out a puff of smoke from her nose. Now wasn’t the time to be standing around like a fool without a brain.

**Happy, let’s go.**

Regina only seemed to grow more shocked as Emma’s words rang through her mind, no doubt not having expected the dragon to be able to speak telepathically. Before she could prepare herself for what happened next, Happy grabbed the brunette by her underarms and began to lift her into the air.

‘What on earth are you doing?’ the queen cried out in indignation, her voice filled with pure panic. ‘Put me down!’

‘Oh, calm down, 'Gina,’ huffed the yellow exceed, grunting in his efforts.

Happy set Regina down at the pace of the dragon’s neck where she proceeded to flail with her hands until she clutched onto the golden mane.

‘You’re not as light as you think, you know?’

‘Excuse me?’

Paying the queen’s grievances no mind, Emma’s front and hind legs spread a little wider before she leapt into the air. The dragon would be lying if she said that she didn’t enjoy the terrified yelp that escaped Regina’s lips.

**Enchanted Forest—Past**

Emma, Mulan and Ruby all blinked in unison as they sat huddled together around the campfire. In the savior’s hand she held a small hammer, roughly the size of a toddler’s fist. All three of them looked like they had just emerged from a bar fight given the amount of injuries that they had obtained.

They had set up tent after emerging a little over twelve hours from the entrance of the Labyrinth, beaten, bruised with most likely horrible concussions, but they were alive and that is the important part.

Let Emma tell you, that Daedalus guy that created this maze was an asshole.

Sure she would probably be bitter and lonely if her sun flew too close to the sun and then fell to his death, but she wouldn’t go around sucking her automaton creatures after travels who were just completing a quest given by Hephaestus himself.

That inventor guy took the expression *You can pry it from my cold dead fingers* too literally.

It’s a good thing that he had a recent amount of sane braincells left, because one look at Ruby in her wolf form and he was handing the "Hammer of creation" over with instructions. However, there was one small concern. The hammer was the size of a squirrel and weighed about an ounce less than a feather.

Celestial steel was light. It was why even Henry could lift the swords so easily, but those weapons only had flakes of the metal. This hammer was crafted from the purest of pure.

‘Is it just me...’ Ruby sat back as she trailed off, her eyes planted on the godly tool. ‘Or does this
thing look like one of those hammers that doctors use to test your reflexes?’

Emma shook her head and frowned, ‘No, no, it’s not just you.’ The blonde sighed heavily, then tucked the item into her leather jacket. ‘All those who think that old fart in the labyrinth played us, raise your right hand and say I.’

In unison, all three raised their hands and chorused the word.

It filled Emma with uncertainty and worry that she had already managed to botch this important task that Hephaestus had bestowed upon her. Then that would definitely portray how doomed all of the fairytale characters were that counted on her as their protector.

This was supposed to have been a confidence boost; a reminder that she could still do this even without Regina there to help her with her magic.

Look how well that all turned out.

Maybe everyone was better off without her. Regina didn’t seem like she needed her. She had made that fact abundantly clear with how easy it had been to simply cut Emma out of her life. And Henry had the brunette as a mother. Why did he need two of them when one constantly failed spectacularly in every way possible.

‘I’m gonna go and toss myself off a cliff,’ grumbled Emma trying to rise to her feet, only to have Ruby reach out and pull her back down onto the fallen log. ‘Ugh, Ruby, let go.’

The she-wolf grabbed the blonde around her neck and ruffled her hair affectionately, ‘No way, Swan. This is an intervention.’ The woman turned towards Mulan and rose an eyebrow. ‘I said it right, right?’

‘Yes, Ruby,’ reassured Mulan, patting the woman’s shoulder. Then to Emma she declared, ‘This self-pity needs to stop.’

‘Oh, yeah?’ Emma scowled as she struggled against Ruby’s hold, huffing and puffing like a steamroller. ‘Both of you are one to talk. The two of you are wallowing in the lake of self-pity. You don’t think I’ve noticed all the emotional eating that you’ve been doing?’

Mulan and Ruby shared an offended look with one another only to relent by shrugging their shoulders and nod their heads in agreement.

‘This isn’t about us,’ defended Ruby. ‘We at least refrain from sending our godmothers into a state of panic by thinking that they would have to tell their mother that they managed to get their eldest child killed. Especially since said mother has roughly around a thousand silver arrows.’

Finally, given Ruby’s inhuman strength, Emma ceased her struggle and went limp in the brunette’s arms. The blonde blew out an exhausted breath and then looked up at her friend, ‘You’re younger than me.’

‘Not chronologically, I’m not.’

Mulan rolled her eyes at their antics and crossed her arms over her chest, ‘Could we stay on topic, please?’

‘Right,’ nodded Ruby. ‘My point is, so what if Regina’s a bitch. We already know that much. It’s okay that you’re not over her, but this self-destructive behavior has got to stop.’
Ruby allowed Emma to slip out of her grasp, a frown etched on the blonde’s forehead. She considered her friend’s words intently. It was easier said than done.

God, she loved Regina.

When she was with the woman she felt as though she could just be her ridiculous childish self. Despite her string of insults, Emma could always see the small smile underneath her bravado. She knew that the woman must care for her in some odd way. However, not in the way that Emma wished her to. Regina loved Robin and he loved her, even if they couldn’t be together. It was the endless donut of life’s crappy luck.

‘Yeah,’ lied Emma. ‘You’re right.’ She stuck her hand into her pocket and felt for the hammer. ‘I’ll get my shit together.’

She might not mean it at that moment, but she was going to get over Regina. One way or another. If that meant time traveling for how ever long an immortal god wished, then so be it.
Good morning, dearies.

Welcome to the wonderful world of fanfiction once more. Where everything is canon and no one can tell us that we’re lunatics.

Even if we are.

The Charming’s loft was completely deserted for the evening with everyone out for Henry’s birthday party. Mary Margaret and David’s bedroom was of course the only room in the house that qualified as neat even if Neal’s cot stood off to the side, closest to his mother’s part of the bed. Emma and Happy’s shared sleeping area could hardly qualify as that given how most of their things were strewn around hazardously. Piles of dirty dishes littered the kitchen, most of them belonging to the dragon and her exceed.

When Emma had been away, the living space was quite neat due to Mary Margaret’s magical cleaning touch. However, it had also been empty without the blonde. It may have only been a month, but it was the longest month that the parents had endured without even so much as a phone call or a text from her.

Through the small gap of the window in what qualified as the living room, Eris’s shadowy presence slipped inside. She morphed into her regular, beautiful self, glancing around leisurely. A soft and satisfied smile graced her lips as she began to move through the loft, taking in the area her lover had chosen to stay. The goddess pulled up her nose for such a small and cramped home, but this place screamed *Emma Swan*. It was why she found herself adoring each and every piece the loft.

With godly grace, she made her way up the staircase that led up towards Emma’s bedroom. She pushed through the red door that separated the rest of the loft from her lover’s quarters. On top of the pure white drawer lay the dragon’s large traveling sack she had lugged around on her journeys. A golden glow emanated from within the possession causing a devilish smile to spread across Eris’s luscious red lips.

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The goddess stepped over the clothing that littered the floor and making one wonder if there was even a floor at all. She didn’t particularly care that Emma was a slob. All she cared about was what she would be capable of getting out of her union with the savior. Once she reached the baggage, she easily undid the clip with the wave of a hand and the flap flew wide open. Reaching into the sack, the goddess received a beautiful golden apple.

‘Soon, my love,’ whispered Eris, her blood red eyes mesmerized by the item. ‘Soon we will be together without these mortals who keep you from our destiny.’

* 

Emma is not so sure that she thought this entire plan through to be honest. Of course she was a dragon and of course she was fast enough to catch up with Noctua, but then there was the problem of the actual fight itself. Regina was on her back and Henry was in the bird’s claws. Either one of
them could get injured or, gods forbid, they could fall to an icy death to the frozen ocean below.

So, no. Emma did not think her plan through for even one second. She doubted that her brain had even come up with one.

Though, she didn’t have to second guess herself before she intercepted Noctua. The dragon flew right in front of the enormous bird, cutting it off from its current path. Behind Noctua, one could see Storybrooke’s lights in the distance which meant that they thankfully hadn’t flown that far.

Noctua released a furious squawk, clearly not sensing the danger that he was currently in. Emma returned the challenge in kind, a deafening roar tearing from her mouth. The sound caused both Henry and Regina to try and cover their ears as best they could under the circumstances, as their eardrums were threatening to burst.

The dragon flew closer to Noctua, grasping onto the bird’s body with her front feet and digging into its flesh. Crying out, the bird released Henry with one of his feet whilst remaining suspended with the other one. Noctua brought up his talons and delivered a slice across Emma’s chest. The beast sunk its canines into the bird’s wing in retaliation.

This time, Noctua did finally release Henry and the boy plummeted down to the earth below. Happy reacted on instincts and immediately dove after the brunet. The exceed expertly swooped down and grasped Henry’s clothing in his paws. With one sharp tug, Henry’s fall came to a swift and happy ending. His cries of terror finally stopped when he realized that the ocean was no longer approaching him at a rapid pace.

Henry looked up at his small savior and flashed a thankful grin as Happy began to readjust him into a better hold, so that his grip wouldn’t slip once more.

‘Thanks, Happy.’

‘You’re welcome, kid,’ grinned the exceed cheekily.

‘You do realize that I’m older than you, right?’

Emma could feel Regina clutching onto her for dear life, and whilst she felt bad for knowingly dragging the woman along she had known that the woman would have been too stubborn to settle for anything less. The dragon unlocked her jaw before giving a hard shove with her front and hind legs in order to place some distance between herself and the bird. This offered both Regina the opportunity to gather her bearings and get a better grip on Emma’s mane and Happy an opportunity to return to their side.

Noctua squawked in pain, flapping its wings furiously as it tried to regain its balance. The bird seemed to be taking a moment to assess his injuries in order to determine if he would be able to go on fighting Emma without dying.

Happy, I need you to take Regina and Henry back for me.

‘Ma, we can’t leave you to fight this thing alone!’ exclaimed Henry. ‘Let mom help at least.’

The dragon huffed out a cloud of smoke through her nostrils and proceeded to ignore the boy. She was upset with him that he didn’t listen to her when she told him to stay put, and whilst she knew she was being a child, there wasn’t any time to have this argument with him now. Noctua seemed to be well on its way to preparing for another clash.

*Both of them are more than you’re used to carrying, but I can’t fight Eris’s sorry excuse for an*
‘Aye, sir!’ The feline saluted, nodding his head firmly. ‘You just make grilled dodo bird out of this thing, alright?’

**Roger that, Happy. Keep ’em safe for me. I’ll be back in no time.**

‘Emma, I’m staying with you,’ informed Regina stubbornly. ‘There must be something I can do?’

Emma’s tail reached up to her back and tenderly wrapped around Regina’s waist. Even if the sorceress was doing her best to hold onto the dragon’s mane, she was easily tugged off by the limb.

**All you’ll do is get yourself killed.**

The dragon’s green orbs connected with the brunette’s russet ones, and instead of being cold or diminishing, they were soft and caring. One could perhaps call them compassionate in that moment.

**I’ll be fine. I promise.**

Noctua released a battle cry of its own, setting her sights on Emma once more. The dragon practically shoved Regina into Happy’s direction and before he even had a proper grip, Emma let go of the brunette. The yellow feline just managed to shift Henry’s shirt into his one paw before he was gripping onto Regina’s wrist and saving her from a plunge down to the iced waters below.

Emma once again gripped onto Noctua’s body with her front feet, grunting as the bird began to snap at her hide. It was obvious that she was struggling profusely against the large beast as she fended him off enough to prevent her family from being caught in the crossfire.

**Go!** Emma ordered through their minds as a roar tore through her mouth. **Go now!**

Happy didn’t need to be told twice before he burst into a inhuman speed. He kept a tight grip on mother and son as he made haste to reach the shore of Storybrooke and return to Emma’s side once he did.

Outside the diner, Mary Margaret, Belle and Granny stood waiting. The first held little Neal close to her chest to keep him warm whilst the latter stood with her crossbow ready to simply take aim and fire at any intended target. The older woman also didn’t seem as pleased with the two women as she led on, no doubt annoyed that they were outside whilst the rest were all still inside the diner.

Happy set both Regina and Henry down with such grace that it was impossible for either of them to even think of complaining that they were mishandled. The yellow exceed checked them over for any injuries lest he wanted his pseudo mother to be upset with him for not getting their family the help that they required.

‘Oh, thank goodness that you’re alright!’ exclaimed Mary Margaret, moving through the small white picket gate with the other two women hot on her heels. ‘Henry, were you injured? Where’s Emma? Is she still fighting that—’

‘They’re fine, Mrs. Mom,’ reassured Happy as mother and son drew one another close.

The feline was a little concerned by their lack of conversation, but he chalked it off as worry for Emma and for one another that had taken its toll on them.

‘No, scratches whatsoever, but they are a little cold. So, I suggest you take them in for hot cocoa.’
‘Aye,’ agreed Granny. ‘T’is a grand idea.’ The older woman looked to everyone present with a pointed look, leaving no room for an argument. ‘Best not to make their job any harder by standing out here in the open like this. T’is safer inside.’

‘But Emma’s alright?’ questioned Belle worriedly. ‘She’ll be okay?’

‘Aye,’ assured Happy. ‘She’s still battling Noctua, but she will win. She has to.’ The yellow creature gave Regina and Henry a meaningful look. ‘Now, please go inside. Emma’ll tan my hide if you freeze to death out here. We’ll be back soon.’

‘You cannot expect me to just sit on the sidelines!’ Regina cried out in indignation, but as she growled she gripped Henry closer to herself, not yet ready to let go. ‘She’s out there risking her life.’

‘Well, what are you going to do?’ hissed Happy furiously. ‘You don’t have your magic and that means that you will be a liability. Emma’s up against a giant frikkin’ chicken the size of a pirate ship! She’s a frikkin’ dragon and she’s barely made a dent in that thing!’

‘I’m pretty sure it’s more like an owl,’ Mary Margaret added unhelpfully. ‘Chicken’s generally can’t fly.’

Regina glanced over to the pixie haired woman and shot her a glare that yelled Are you serious right now? The woman immediately clammed her mouth shut and adjusted Neal on her hip.

Happy huffed in frustration, agitated to get back to the fight. ‘You can’t help us right now. None of you can. Just stay out of the way, please. For your sake as much as Emma’s.’

Just like that the small creature burst into the air and took off.

There was nothing that Regina, or anyone for that matter could do. It dawned on the sorceress that she was once again powerless to do anything. It seemed to be the norm nowadays where Emma found herself in trouble and the brunette was incapable of helping. Even if Regina did have her magic, what could she possibly do to aid Emma against a threat like this? What could she do against a threat like Eris?

Next to her, Henry began tugging gently on Regina’s sleeve. She forced herself to look away from where Happy was now turning into nothing more than a spec of his former self. The sorceress must have looked clinically insane given her disheveled hair, torn clothes and the fact that both her heels were now missing.

‘Mom, come on,’ encouraged Henry. ‘Let’s go inside and wait for Emma and Happy.’

With a small tug, Regina allowed the boy to lead her after the other three woman. Just before the reached the sidewalk however, the brunette stopped in her tracks. She bent down and lifted Emma’s waistcoat off the tar road. Henry waited patiently as his mother stared intensely at the piece of clothing.

Then, Regina did something that shocked both of them. The sorceress brought it up to her face and smelled the scent that belonged to none other than the savior herself.

It smelled like burning embers and lavender.

* 

Dragon’s skin was indestructible. At least for the most part. Two main weak points were their underbellies and a spot just behind their left years. The former was rather common knowledge, but
the latter was a closely guarded secret amongst the reptiles in order to protect their species for future
generations.

Emma hadn’t been a dragon for that long. Give or take a few months, she had only been one for
three years. That barely even qualified as a newborn and whilst she had learned a lot already, she still
had so much more to understand. Emma was still a juvenile and she wasn’t as naive as she was to
dare try and deny it.

The dragon was painfully aware of this as Noctua’s talons swiped across Emma’s lower belly for a
umpteenth time. Her leathery skin was covered in scratches and oozing blood, but still she fought on.
With each painful cut administered to her body, she returned in kind upon the bird’s. One of them
was bound to run out of blood soon enough and the dragon would bet all the gold in the world that it
wasn’t going to be her.

Noctua’s feather’s were covered in red specks and left little surface area for the snowy white that
they had once been. The bird was also becoming more tired by the second from the excessive
exertion of energy and the blood loss. It no longer cried out in pain whenever Emma’s canines sank
into a part of the animal.

Happy flew off to the side, constantly encouraging Emma in an attempt to keep her awake during the
battle and prevent her from transforming back into her human self. They couldn’t afford it if she lost
consciousness and risk losing now. Not only would she be endangering the town, but she would no
doubt be signing the death warrants of her family. Eris might not want her dead and want to keep
their deal alive to get what she wants, but her pets usually had minds of their own.

Emma and Noctua burst apart once more to each regain their bearings. Not only were they draining
one another by continuously drawing blood, but essentially staying in the air at such a height was
also tiring. The bird was clearly more experienced of course, essentially possessing thousands of
years of experience whilst Emma had only recently begun to transform into her dragon form.

‘Come on, Emma!’ encouraged Happy. ‘Just a little longer. You can do this!’

**I’m exhausted, Happy.**

Emma wasn’t exactly complaining, mostly just stating a fact. Hell, she could barely even keep her
eyes open. This was the longest that she had ever stayed in this form and it took a great toll on her
reserves. In fact, she was running quite low and felt like she was close to simply running out.

‘No, you’re not,’ the feline’s tone was stern and left no room for argument. ‘Don’t be lazy. You can
sleep when you beat this dodo bird.’

The dragon scowled in the direction of her friend, but essentially pushed on. Again she put on a burst
of speed. Emma clashed against Noctua, pushing their heads against one another as they fought for
their piece of the sky.

‘Alright!’ Happy exclaimed, a grin spreading across his face as he threw his paw into the air. ‘That’s
it, Emma! This guy’s got nothing on you!’

A roar tore through Emma’s throat as she pulled back and then rammed her horns into Noctua’s
chest. Her horns pierced the bird’s heart and drew one last agonizing squawk form the animal as she
continued to push forward against her opponent.

As the life drained from the bird, the skies began to open up slowly once more. Below them, the
ocean began to unfreeze and slowly but surely the ice began to break away. Emma shook the
enormous animal off and withdrew her horns from its flesh. Without even a flinch, the dragon allowed the bird to drop down to the icy waters below.

The dragon took a moment to admire her victory before she essentially transformed into her human form. Before she could fall a great distance, Happy flew to catch her, gripping her by her underarms.

Emma smiled weakly as she stared down at the ocean below them, sporting bags under her eyes. The material wrapped around her breasts were now beginning to soak in blood dew to the claw marks across her chest and the other cuts across her toned abdomen.

‘How’d I do, little buddy?’ Emma questioned, barely remaining conscious as the adrenaline began to wore off and the exhaustion of exerting so much magic finally catching up on her.

To Happy she was going to be a deadweight, and she felt slightly guilty because her body was heavier than a regular human’s. However, she couldn’t bring herself to care about it.

‘You still take too much damage, but it was better this time around,’ Happy smiled down proudly at Emma, his voice filled with adoration and amazement despite his criticism. ‘We still have to work towards at least one roar.’

‘Mm,’ hummed Emma, closing her eyes tiredly. ‘S’okay. Do it t’morrow.’

‘Aye, sir.’

When Emma awakened from the battle, no doubt due to her stomach that was begging for something to eat, Regina was filled with relief like she never had been before.

For the past few hours into the night she, the Charming’s, Henry and Happy had stood watch over the dragon as she slept. Whilst her battle wounds had been quite severe and would have left scarring, the sorceress had cleaned them as best she could. In no time her wounds had begun to heal and they would all be closed come morning.

Halfway through monitoring Emma’s condition, Regina had forced the Charming’s to go to bed and did the same to Henry, instructing him to take the couch in the living room. Happy had outright refused to go to sleep and assured the family that he would stay up alongside Regina, even if she herself wasn’t too keen on the idea.

‘Damn,’ muttered Emma, moving to sit up, but winced when she was painfully reminded of her condition.

The sorceress flew up from her chair, nearly knocking it over in her haste to reach Emma and prevent the blonde from injuring herself more severely than she already was.

‘Careful,’ hissed Regina ferociously, forcing Emma gently down onto her pillow once more. ‘You’ll tear your stitches and I would have to redo them again, you fool.’

Rolling her eyes, Emma turned her head towards Happy. The small feline had been seated next to her on the bed, but had proceeded to stand on his hind paws when the dragon had begun to show signs of awakening.

‘What year is it?’

‘It’s 2040. Our president’s a plant.’
'Do you even know what a president is?'

‘Aye, sir!’

The blonde shook her head and released a soft chuckle in amusement. Trust Happy to turn a serious situation into something to smile about. Given that Regina was about to give her one hell of a talking to.

‘What, in the ever-loving hell, were you thinking?’

_Yup. She’s pissed._

Despite Regina’s warnings and protests, Emma forced herself into a sitting position. The dragon reached for the glass of water on the nightstand which prompted Regina to intercept her. Stepping forward, the sorceress brought the glass up to Emma’s lips and proceeded to aid her in drinking the contents inside.

The silence that hung between them all was deafening and the tension only seemed to continuously grow the longer Emma took to deliberately drink the water as slowly as she could. Regina had been terrified when Happy had brought Emma’s limp form into the diner, her hair covered in her opponent’s blood and the rest of her body covered in her own. Regina was powerless to help and she was powerless to protect this woman from any harm.

‘I slept well, thanks for asking,’ informed Emma cheekily once the glass was empty and Regina moved to set it down on the nightstand once more. ‘Dreamt about flying four headed dolphins that shoots rainbows out of their mouths and then I make out with Judy Garland’s younger self.’

Regina stared at Emma in disbelief, her anger only growing due to the woman’s nonexistent concern for her own safety.

‘You think this is some kind of joke? That recklessly endangering yourself was some kind of a game?’

Pursing her lips, Emma ignored her questions and turned towards Happy. ‘Hey, little buddy. Why don’t you go downstairs and make us some hot cocoa. Henry showed you how.’

‘With cinnamon?’

‘Yeah, with cinnamon.’

Happy nodded his head in agreement, sending Regina a silent plea not to push anything anymore than she already had. But, of course, the brunette barreled on with her own plan, simply crossing her arms over her chest to stand her ground. The feline’s ears practically drooped on the floor as he made his way towards the exit, shutting the door behind him to give them some privacy.

‘No, Regina, I don’t think that this was a game,’ huffed Emma in annoyance, her gaze shooting up to meet Regina’s. ‘However, Gold wasn’t exactly jumping on top of the opportunity to offer his services despite his “goody-too-shoes” act, your magic is all over the place and the fae barely even know how to do a basic protection spell to keep Leroy out of the communion wine. I did what I was born to do: Save people.’

‘You could have died!’

‘Please, I’ve been through worse,’ scoffed Emma. ‘And if I did die, I would have taken that damn bird down with me and would have solved our Eris problem. No Emma, no Eris.’
‘What’s happened to you, Emma?’ questioned Regina bitterly. ‘Do you honestly care that little for your own safety that you continuously throw yourself headfirst into every dangerous situation?’

‘I’ve always been like this,’ Emma pointed out. ‘For some reason, you just care if I might die or not and it’s a little annoying to say the least.’

‘It annoys you that I care whether or not you die?’

‘Yes!’ exclaimed Emma, waving her arms around dramatically. ‘You’ve never cared before! You wanted me to drop dead! You didn’t even acknowledge my existence for two months!’

A growl escaped Regina’s throat and she uncrossed her arms to clench her fists at her sides, ‘I’ve already apologized! What more could you possibly want?’

‘An apology can’t just fix what you broke! It doesn’t work like that!’

‘Oh? Like you broke up Robin and I?’ Regina pointed out. ‘Please, Miss Swan. Enlighten what I have broken?’

‘Me!’ spat Emma, a roar tearing through her throat, her stomach lighting up as though she was about to exhale fire. ‘You broke me!’

The words hung above their heads like a plague, weighing heavily on both their chests and only worsening the pain that they carried. The admission only increased the guilt that Regina was already feeling for driving Emma away like she had all those weeks ago.

Emma took a deep breath to calm her shaking form and to rid herself of the fire that had begun to build in her belly. Anger only led to an involuntary transformation or she would do something that she would regret.

‘How do we fix this?’ questioned Regina, her voice soft as though she was speaking to Henry, but somehow more tender. ‘I don’t know what to do to undo the damage that has been caused.’

‘I don’t know, ‘Gina,’ sighed Emma frustratedly. ‘I really don’t know.’
I’ll Die At Supper

Chapter Notes

So...

I may or may not have torn the ligaments in my left knee. Painkillers is my bitch and I’m most like heading for a sonar scan on Monday. Yet, I am updating anyways.

I noticed a comment about how it’s missed why Regina’s powers have gone haywire. In my version of things magic is different in the Land Without Magic just like it had been when magic had first come to Storybrooke in season 2 and Regina struggled to control her powers. Only this time it’s a lot funnier. I think I mention this in Chapter 8: *I Have Sexual Tension With A Goddess* where Henry lists the reasons why Regina should not attempt to help Marian with her magic.

Anyways, onto the story...

‘Census records from the first and second curses,’ Mary Margaret dropped several green binders down onto the dining table. She moved Neal up on her hip so that he wouldn’t slip out of her grasp. ‘If Anna's ever in Storybrooke, we'll find some trace of her here.’

Elsa stared the large stack with wary eyes, lifting up the top binder from the pile and opening it to take a look at the contents inside.

‘Your curses are very thorough.’

Mary Margaret glanced from the binders up to Elsa, shaking her head, ‘That's just A through E.’

The queen’s eyes nearly doubled in size just as David entered the room with a much larger pile of the correction of records.

‘Here are the rest of them.’

Laughter filled the air as Emma and Happy descended down the stairs. The dragon was dressed in her red leather jacket, her white tank top and a pair of jeans. Happy on the other hand was wearing a suit tailored to fit his small form.

They both stopped in their tracks at the bottom of the stairs when they realized that they were being watched. Turning their attention towards the eyes at the dining table, Emma and Happy held their arms out.

‘What do you guys think?’ inquired Emma, glancing down at her attire before continuing on her path further into the room. ‘Good enough for dinner for tonight?’

‘You’re wearing your jacket?’ Mary Margaret seemed pleasantly surprised.

The others simply just continued to stare given how strange Emma looked dressed in clothing that covered her torso.
Then there was also Happy.

Dressed in a suit.

‘What? You don’t like it?’ Emma teased. ‘I still have time. I can change back into—’

‘No!’ exclaimed David, a bit more forcefully than he intended.

At the outburst, most of the occupants in the room rose their eyebrows in shock at the sudden exclamation.

‘I, er, I mean, you should dress more... well, in more clothes like this.’

Emma shook her head and stifled her laughter whilst Happy giggled like a kindergartner high on sugary treats.

It wasn’t like David ever tried to hide his dislike of her clothing, but she hadn’t thought that what she wore was inappropriate. After all, she couldn’t remember the last time that she had to worry about her appearance.

‘What’s the occasion?’ Elsa questioned, tone filled with interest and curiousness, sounding almost childlike.

If Emma wasn’t head over heels for Regina, and if Eris wasn’t a problem, then she would have definitely taken this Queen’s innocence the second she could.

‘It’s Wednesday,’ informed Emma with a shrug of her shoulders. ‘Family din-din at the mansion with Regina and Henry. Madame Mayor thought it would be a good idea if we try to establish some form of stability with the kid like we had before... you know... The Incident.’

‘That’s a wonderful idea, sweetheart,’ beamed Mary Margaret. ‘I see that Happy will be joining you, all dressed up and dapper for tonight.’

‘Why, thank you, Milady,’ Henry bowed at Mary Margaret, his grin nearly splitting his head in half. ‘Emma and the kid invited me to come with. Apparently Miss Regina’s food is to die for!’

‘Oh, it is,’ confirmed David, nodding his head approvingly. ‘Hell, I’m pretty sure people would wage wars for even a piece of her lasagna dish.’

‘I’d be inclined to agree,’ giggled Mary Margaret.

‘But, if you need me to stay and help with—’ Emma motioned to the census records on the dining room table with her right hand before she stuck them in her jean’s front pockets. ‘—this. I’m sure Gina and Henry will understand if I have to cancel. I mean, it’s probably not that great of an idea anyway—we’d probably just end up arguing and Henry’ll be pissed, and I’ll be pissed and—’

‘Emma,’ interrupted Elsa, her tone stern and demanding in order to gain the dragon’s attention. Once she had it, she softened considerably. ‘My sister put her wedding on hold because of me. I don’t want anyone else to stop living their lives on my account.’

‘Yeah, but—’

‘No, buts,’ Elsa shook her head. ‘You and Regina need to sort out your differences if you’re going to stop the goddess, Eris. We all need you to think rationally when we are faced against our common enemy.’
'Emma?' Happy questioned rhetorically, his tone teasing as he raised his paws to his cheek in mock innocence. 'Think? Emma think rationally? We’d have an easier time convincing Athena that Poseidon isn’t such a bad guy.'

Emma narrowed her eyes as she glanced down at her companion, ‘Why do I even put up with you?’

‘Because you lllloooove me.’

Rolling her eyes, Emma proceeded to cross her arms over her chest and turned back to face her family and Elsa.

‘I don’t know how long we’ll be, so don’t wait up. My phone is on the entire time and I will be reachable no matter if there’s a Frost Giant stomping down main street. Please call me preferably before then.’

‘Please, try and enjoy yourself,’ Mary Margaret practically begged.

‘Yeah, but—’

‘Emma, come on!’ Happy huffed impatiently, flying over to the door with a high pitched whine. ‘No wonder Belle kicked you out of the library yesterday. You’re the biggest micromanager I have ever met!’

‘She kicked me out because I can speak latin better than her, I just can’t translate it—’

Their bantering trailed off into the hallway outside as the door shut behind them. The trio all shared amused looks with one another before they set to work.

* 

There was no sign of Eris whatsoever, and what made it worse was that Emma had no idea why she had sent Noctua to keep them all distracted. David and the deputies had scoped every inch of the loft, having nearly torn it apart. Yet, they found no trace of the goddess. That could only mean one of two things:

One. Emma was wrong in assuming what she wanted was in the loft.

And two. Eris had exactly what she wanted, but they had no clue as to what it was or even where to begin looking for it.

Even if the cuff wrapped around her wrist was helping immensely, she could feel the constant pull towards Eris. It wouldn’t have been so annoying if it was useful to, say find Eris and put a stop to her next master plan to get Emma into her chambers, but yet here they were without any leads as to where she was hiding and a horny Emma Swan. The latter was much more frustrating than the former.

Dinner with the Mills’s household wasn’t the worst idea to take their minds off their latest crisis and would help them re-establish their routines. Though it had taken several pleas from Henry and Happy to get Emma to accept Regina’s dinner invitation. Things might be heading for the light at the end of this dark tunnel, but there was still a lot to work through.

The walk to Mifflin street was pleasantly quiet. Most of the town’s people were already inside their homes for the evening. It was opted that they stay inside with Eris causing discord and chaos all around town whenever she showed up. Curfews weren’t necessary since Emma knew that Eris wouldn’t actually hurt anyone due to their deal, but that didn’t mean that everyone wasn’t scared.
108 Mifflin Street was exactly the same as Emma remembered it. Granted, she was technically only a month away, so nothing major should have changed, but the blonde hadn’t seen the mansion in three years. Even if it did feel like only yesterday when she arrived with the ten-year-old kid by her side and hellbent on driving all the way back to Boston so that she would never have to think of Storybrooke ever again.

‘Are you nervous?’

Turning towards Happy, Emma suddenly realized that she had been staring at the white door for the past few minutes yet to knock. Her fist was raised, but she had hesitated just before her knuckles made contact with the hardwood.

Dropping her hand, Emma took a deep breath and exhaled through her nose. Smoke filled the air, expressing the blonde’s frustration without her having to say it out loud.

‘Little bit,’ muttered Emma, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘Am I bad person for wanting to forget this whole thing and jump back through a portal?’

‘Probably,’ Happy walked closer to Emma’s side and placed a comfort paw on her jean cladded thigh. ‘Our family is here. Family comes first above anything else, right?’

Emma smiled briefly at the small creatures words, ‘Right, little buddy.’

‘Then stop being an idiot and knock,’ deadpanned Happy. ‘You didn’t make me dress up for nothing.’

‘Oh, I made you dress up?’ Emma scoffed. ‘You practically threatened me if we didn’t come.’

‘Now you’re just being dramatic.’

‘Yeah, well, you—’

Whatever Emma wanted to say was cut off when the door flew open, revealing Regina Mills in her full glory. The blonde swore her heart stopped then and there from the sight of the mayor in that gorgeous red dress. A deep blush began to spread over her cheeks, going as far as painting her ears red as she glanced Regina up and down.

There hadn’t been a day that had gone by without Emma thinking of this little number on Regina’s figure. It wasn’t too revealing and yet it drove Emma crazy at the same time.

‘Did you plan on standing out here all evening or were you actually planning on knocking? We heard everything, you know?’

Emma pouted furiously and crossed her arms indignantly over her chest. ‘I was getting around to it,’ grumbled the dragon, shooting a sideways glare at her companion. ‘Happy was distracting me.’

‘She says to the exceed who was the one convincing her to knock.’

The blonde growled before she delivered a kick as one would to a football to the feline, sending him straight into the bushes that led down the walkway.

Regina raised a shocked eyebrow at Emma’s display of anger, even if it was rightfully so directed towards Happy. A moment later, the feline dropped out of the hedge onto the walkway, coughing up pieces of the plant that was in his mouth. However, the feline seemed fine injury wise.
This dinner was already off to a great start.

Huffing, Emma faced Regina once again and with a circular motion of her hand a small portal opened above it. From it fell an arrangement of pure white orchids, the most beautiful ones that Regina had ever laid her eyes on. She stared at Emma in surprise when she held the flowers out towards her.

‘What are these?’ Regina looked from the flowers to Emma’s now smirking face.

‘Flowers,’ informed Emma. ‘Well, at least that’s what Mo told me. If their not then I am definitely having a word with him tomorrow about ripping people off.’

Regina rolled her eyes, ‘I meant, what they’re doing here?’

‘Their a gift. You know? A thing given willingly to someone without payment; a present,’ chuckled the blonde. ‘You do know what a gift is, right?’

‘Of course I do,’ snarked Regina, gentility taking the orchids from the blonde’s hands. ‘Don’t be ridiculous.’

Emma couldn’t help but allow her chest to swell up with some form of pride. Bringing flowers to Regina for whenever she was invited to dinner wasn’t uncommon. In fact, the blonde was quite certain that Robin Hood had never bought Regina flowers. She could say for a fact that he didn’t even know what her favorite flowers were.

Despite Regina’s obvious annoyance from their banter, Emma knew that the woman secretly enjoyed receiving the arrangements. It usually brought out this twinkle in the brunette’s eyes that told Emma she was the first person besides Daniel to do it.

By now, in the time that Emma was smirking at Regina from ear to ear and the latter tried to pretend that she was annoyed with the blonde’s presence, Happy had made it back to his partner’s side. No one would even be able to tell that he had just been treated like sports equipment.

‘Thank you,’ Regina muttered softly, directing towards the flowers in her hands. ‘I love orchids.’

‘I know,’ shrugged Emma, before stepping past Regina and deeper into the foyer of the mansion. Happy followed suit, his head glancing all around in awe of the beautiful and enormous home.

Regina rolled her eyes for what she was certain wouldn’t be the last time that evening before she shut the door.

*

Henry had missed this.

Missed his entire family being together. For the past three months it had been torture without Emma as a constant within their household. Wednesday nights had once again become just him and Emma or just him and Regina.

Now, he loved both his moms equally and with all the strength of his heart, but they were so dense at times that it wasn’t even funny. Don’t let him even get started on his feelings towards Robin Hood. Henry adored Roland, but the blond man was a tool to put it simply.

Dinner wasn’t as strained as it had been the first time that Emma had come home. Henry also wasn’t the only one making conversation. Happy was all too... happy to go on enthusiastically about how
strange this world was and unlike anything that he had ever seen before. Then there was Emma and
Regina who actually talked to one another. Nothing major, but it was a start at least.

Regina had prepared dishes such as her famous lasagna and an apple pie that was quite to die for
(thankfully not really—this time at least). Emma and Happy were constantly reaching for more,
making his mother smile more than he had ever seen her smile, even whilst she had been with Robin.

‘Dinner is great, Regina,’ complimented Emma, bringing another forkful up to her mouth and
practically sinking her canines into the cutlery. ‘Every time I think you couldn’t possibly outdo
yourself, you go and prove me wrong.’

Regina tried to hide her grin behind her wine glass, but that was seemingly impossible as it reached
her russet eyes and making them shine.

‘Well, it’s not that hard to prove you wrong, Miss Swan. It’s quite easy.’

‘Aye, sir!’ Happy exclaimed. ‘It is!’

Emma shot a look towards Happy, which the exceed seemed completely oblivious to.

The odd family sat around the dining table with Regina at the head, Henry on her right and Happy
on her left. Emma had found her place next to Happy, placing some distance between herself and
Regina lest she wanted to risk any arguments sour such a lovely evening.

Whilst the conversation had broached a range of topics, they avoided any discussion regarding
Marian and Eris. It just seemed safer this way and they all would rather avoid summoning the
goddess and any chaos that she would create if Emma spoke her name.

‘It’s also better than anything I can cook,’ added Emma. ‘Better than Happy’s cooking too.’

‘Hey!’ Happy exclaimed indignantly. ‘At least I can boil water and make toast. You roast anything
you touch.’

Not being able to deny the accusation, Emma merely just shrugged her shoulders in response. As
much as she wanted to argue she knew that she wasn’t the best cook that existed. She had her
moments, but most of the time she would end up burning something because she was too impatient
to wait, so she usually used her magic.

‘I’m guessing you guys had to stick to making your own food most of the time in the Enchanted
Forest?’ inquired Henry curiously.

He was curious to hear about his mother and the exceed’s adventures in their homeland. Whilst
Emma had told them bits and pieces, she was extremely vague most of the time and tended to avoid
the topic of the three years that she had been away. Whilst Henry respected her privacy, he was
dying to know everything that she had seen and battled.

‘Oh, yeah,’ nodded Emma, swallowing the lasagna in her mouth before continuing.

She knew how much Regina hated it when she spoke with her mouth full and she would be a
hypocrite the next time she told Happy off.

‘Wasn’t really a lot of people around most of the time and whenever we were in towns we never had
any money. The gods provided us with what we needed and when we needed it.’

‘Do you miss it? The traveling?’
Emma shrugged her shoulders, noticing Regina’s watchful and disapproving eye. Henry might not be trying to get her in trouble, but if she said the wrong thing she was more than certain that the poor kid will be exposed to their brutal tempers.

‘Sure I do. I loved going places and seeing stuff that wasn’t common in this world,’ a smile graced Emma’s lips as pleasant memories began to bubble to the surface. ‘In the spring, the Southern Isle blossoms quite beautifully. I’ll miss that this year. Maybe I could take you some time to watch the rainbow cherry blossom’s bloom.’

‘Yeah!’ Happy agreed enthusiastically. ‘The trees light up with the different colors of the rainbow on the first day of spring and lasts until midnight. People on the Isle throws a whole festival that lasts an entire week during and after the blooming of the trees.’

‘That sounds awesome!’

Emma and Happy were more forthcoming on their tales in the Enchanted Forest, eager to talk about the more positive adventures that they had had. Both steered very much clear of the topic regarding Hephaestus’s gift to her and Eris’s first encounter with them. They much rather talked about the cultures they had experienced and the people they had met.

Henry listened with wide and curious eyes, drinking in their words like a sponge that thrived on information. There wasn’t much that he thought he didn’t know about that world, after all he had practically studied the book from the inside out and knew it from cover to back. To be frank, he could probably cite the book from front to back as well.

However, as it turns out, what he knew of the Enchanted Forest and the other lands was merely the tip of the iceberg. It shocked him that even Regina seemed to not know about most of the things that Emma and Happy told them. Their adventures had stretched far and wide, making Henry wonder just how many places they had seen in their time apart.

By the end of the evening, Happy and Henry were the ones clearing the table, per request of both his mothers. The boy didn’t particularly understand what they wanted to talk about, but he didn’t question their orders even once. Happy needed a bit more of encouragement, but at least he seemed to catch on at the firm looks Henry shot towards him.

Dishes were dumped hazardously in the dishwasher before both Henry and Happy scrambled back towards the entrance to the kitchen, just so that they could have a better inclining if dinner went as well as Henry had thought it had.

‘This was nice.’

‘I would be inclined to agree with you, Emma,’ hummed Regina.

The boys couldn’t see them, but Henry could imagine Regina awkwardly moving her wine glass in a circular motion before lifting it to her lips.

‘We should make Wednesday nights official again,’ Emma pressed on tentatively, sounding a tad bit hesitant. ‘It’s a good place as any to start, isn’t it?’

‘I suppose you’re right.’ A pause. ‘Though I feel as though there is still this enormous elephant in the room that we don’t particularly wish to address.’

‘...’

‘Emma?’
‘No, I know... It’s just that things are pretty tense and I think we should...’ Emma sighed. ‘...leave the elephant exactly where he is. I don’t think we would ever able to truly sort through everything that has been going on between us.’

Henry winced when he heard Regina set the wine glass down rather harshly. He imagined that she might have been attempting to break the item at the stem given how much force she exerted on it.

‘Well, why not? Don’t you think we owe it to ourselves, to Henry, to rid this unpleasant tension between us?’

‘With all due respect, Regina. I’ve had three years to think over all of this and I think it’s better if we just left things how they were.’ A pause. ‘You’re never going to want to hear what I have to say on the matter and whatever you have to say on the matter is only going to end up crushing me more than I’ve already been.’

‘How dare you assume to know what I think?’ hissed Regina, but Henry could hear the sadness and despair that entered her voice. ‘You accused me of running from my problems and yet you were the one that disappeared for a month, galavanting through time for three years.’

‘...’

Henry face-palmed alongside Happy. The peace had lasted all of two minutes starting when they had left the table. The brunet just wished that they would just talk to each other regarding their feelings rather than trade blow after blow.

‘Happy,’ called Emma, her chair scraping back as she stood onto her feet. ‘We’re leaving.’

Tentatively, they shared a look of annoyance with one another before they returned into the dining room. Henry took note of the way Regina’s shoulders had slumped and the look of utter defeat on her face. Emma on the other hand was clenching her jaw and fists, looking like she was about to take part in a bar brawl.

‘Come say goodnight, kid,’ ordered Emma, her voice a tad bit more forceful than she had most likely intended.

Henry dragged his feet over the tiled floor before he melted into Emma’s open arms. He felt her place a kiss on the side of his head, then she ruffled his hair after pulling away. The brunette smiled affectionately at his mother, unable to help himself.

‘Thanks for coming, Ma,’ Henry tilted his head to the side. ‘It was nice having you here. Both of you.’

‘It was nice catching up with you, kid,’ nodded Emma, the tension still there but at least her eyes had softened as she continued to stare at her son. ‘Be good for your mom, okay?’

The boy nodded his head before he found himself watching his mother and her companion leaving without so much as a glance in Regina’s direction from Emma’s side. Happy at least glanced back, even if he carried a sad expression as he waved goodbye to both of them. It wasn’t long before the front door slammed with such a force that Henry feared the hardwood might have cracked.

‘Damnit,’ Regina muttered, loud enough for Henry’s curious ears to pick up.

**Storybrooke—Two weeks ago**

‘No, Neal!’ Mary Margaret exclaimed in horror. ‘Don’t put that in your mouth!’
Regina’s head darted up from her coffee cup and she turned to where her godson was playing happily on the living room carpet, bringing on of Emma’s old shoes to his awaiting gums.

‘I’ve told Emma a thousand times not to leave her shoes lying about.’

They had been discussing mayoral politics and paperwork of all things just so that the pixie haired woman could give a winning debate with the upcoming board meeting. There were still a lot of problems within Storybrooke, but magical creatures as of late were one of the major concerns. Especially when griffins decided that the sheriff’s cruisers were chew toys. Someone needed to give their budget and insurance a boost or they were soon going to have sit outside in office chairs and try to drive with paper plates.

With a wave of her hand the dirty footwear disappeared out of Neal’s grasp. In her hand Regina pulled out a rattle from nothing and rose to her feet. Wordlessly, she approached the small boy, her heels clicking on the wooden floors. Regina smiled at Neal as he stared at her in complete awe and reached towards her. The sorceress knelt down and handed the toy over to the boy. Neal latched onto the rattle instantly and began to shake it with all his might. He then looked towards Regina and gurgled happily, almost as if he was trying to thank her.

Regina giggled softly, a sound she didn’t often make, ‘You’re welcome, little one.’

She traced her finger from his chin to his cheek. It surprised her when he went to grab the delicate digit, wanting to keep her attention for a little longer.

Mary Margaret stood behind the couch with her arms crossed over her chest as she watched them intently. A smile was etched on her face as she watched the brunette struggle to find it within herself to retrieve her finger.

‘You’re so good with him,’ compliment Mary Margaret, unable to take her eyes off the two of them. ‘He adores you.’

Regina looked to Mary Margaret as if she just remembered that the woman was there. Instantly she pulled her hand away from Neal and then rose to her feet. Due to the sudden movement, Neal misjudged his balance and began to fall forward, his eyes wide with panic. Noticing the boy’s troubles, Regina waved her hand again and uprighted him before he could face plant onto his blanket.

‘Yes, well,’ Regina clasped her hands together as she looked awkwardly to the pixie haired woman. ‘He’s a baby. He doesn’t know any better.’

‘Oh,’ Mary Margaret clicked her tongue. ‘I don’t agree. Children are excellent judges of characters.’

The woman looked towards Neal, releasing a short laugh at the fact that he was holding his hands upwards as he tried to reach for Regina. A frown was etched on his forehead, the famous stubborn Charming look.

The sorceress followed the other woman’s gaze and rose an eyebrow in Neal’s direction.

‘His radar must be inflicted.’

Mary Margaret rolled her eyes, then settled to stare at her son once more, ‘He looks like Emma when he frowns like that.’

It was as though all of the color was completely drained from Regina’s skin. She turned whiter than even Mary Margaret’s complexion as her eyebrows rose into the air.
This, however, went unnoticed by Mary Margaret. Her sole purpose in that moment was to simply admire the beautiful boy that sat there among his toys.

‘It’s my fault that she left,’ Regina found herself admitting, quietly, but it was loud enough for Mary Margaret to hear. The older woman rose her hand to her mouth as tears began to gather in her eyes. ‘Oh, gods, what have I done?’

‘Oh, Regina.’

In two short strides Mary Margaret was pulling a sobbing woman into her arms. It should have been strange, comforting Regina like she was. Especially given how well she knew the woman. However, in that moment, it felt like the most natural thing in the world.
Chapter Notes

So... I’m heading for a sonar for my knee. That oughta be fun.

*Wincs as she waves jazz hands, Yaaaay.*

Anyways, onto the story!

The feeling of lightness had been replaced by a weight nearly unbearable on Emma’s shoulders.

Once upon a time, arguing with Regina and winning had absolutely made her day, but all it did now was cause her more pain with each passing moment. She hated feeling this way, she hated the fact that Regina still had this effect on her after all this time. The dragon had thought she would be able to handle the confrontation, the reality of seeing the woman who tore out her heart every day. It was the reason why Emma had come home in the first place.

Happy’s worried gaze left burns in Emma’s side as they sauntered up the steps to the loft in complete silence. They usually weren’t ones to talk about their feelings, only to remind one another when the other was being an idiot. However, Emma could tell that Happy didn’t know what to say at this moment. She supposed that it was her fault that the poor creature was so unprepared. Emma didn’t know how to offer emotional support and thus she couldn’t teach he feline.

Emma unlocked the loft’s door and allowed her companion to enter first. She soon followed after him, very much aware of his sad and mournful eyes. With a heavy heart she began to shut the door by leaning against it. Emma tossed her keys onto the table beside the coatrack where it landed with a jingle, sliding off on the other end and hitting the floor. The blonde would have cringed at the loud noise, but she was too caught in her own thoughts to pay it any mind.

‘So, how was it?’

‘Dirty cuss word!’ Emma exclaimed nearly jumping straight through the door due to the fright her mother had given her.

Mary Margaret and David were each seated on the small couch at the far end of the living room, both having patiently awaited their arrival. They were still dressed in the clothing that they had been wearing after Emma and Happy had left for their evening out. Emma had no choice but to be inclined to think that they hadn’t moved from that spot for the past couple of hours.

Emma didn’t have any right to hold her parents’s actions against them. After all, Regina had been a major factor why the blonde had left Storybrooke in the first place and the reason that she had stayed away for as long as she possibly could. She would have been surprised if they hadn’t come to the conclusion that however long she stayed would be dependent on the former madam mayor.

‘Mrs. Mom and Mr. Dad!’ Happy greeted enthusiastically. ‘You waited up for us?’

‘Of course we did,’ David smiled, watching the feline making his way towards them. ‘We want to hear how Wednesday Family Dinner went.’
The blonde narrowed her eyes at her mother and father, seeing right through their tactic. She was practically the inventor of weaseling information from children about their parents. Not to mention, Happy was as gullible as a toddler.

‘It was great,’ Happy flew up onto the coffee table, now right in front of the couple. ‘Until Emma and Regina had another argument just before we had to go.’

At her parents’s pointed looks, Emma lifted her finger to prevent them from berating her.

‘In my defense,’ began the blonde. ‘She started it and I was only finishing it. I didn’t intend to argue with her, but she kept on pushing and pushing.’

‘You promised that you would try to get along with her, Em.’

‘Yes, I did, mom,’ huffed Emma, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘However, it is a two-way street. She has to put the effort in too.’ The blonde paused, placing her hands on her hips. ‘And getting information from Happy is a new low, even for the two of you.’ Emma moved her gaze away from Mary Margaret and David to the yellow feline who stared back at her from the small table. ‘Come on, little buddy. Let’s head up to bed.’ She then muttered under her breath, ‘And then start considering how much I really need to get my own place.’

*

Gods and Goddesses were stalkers. That much was certain. Whenever they set their eyes on a specific person, they tried to learn as much as they could about them, watched them every second of the day, intervened with potential suitors if they posed a threat to their “courtship” of the person they fancied.

Eris wasn’t any different than any other of the immortal beings that sat high on their ridiculously large thrones on Olympus. Though, for some bizarre reason, she had yet to lose interest. Most of them were the type of people who hit it and then quit it. They didn’t spend two-to-three years chasing after the same person that they had already been with multiple times.

It would have probably been wise to formulate a plan of action against Eris alongside the rest of her family. She wasn’t supposed to be the person that ran when things got tough, she had to consider both Happy and Henry when she had to decide on the best course of actions, but Emma feared that the only way to keep the town safe from her former lover’s destructive nature was to leave once again.

These troublesome thoughts plagued Emma all through the morning. She didn’t particularly wish to share them with anyone, especially not Happy since he had started to find a home in Storybrooke and Emma didn’t want to suddenly take all of this from him or worry him that it could be a possibility. The blonde hated how Eris had this enormous effect on both their lives.

‘We’ve searched the areas surrounding the Merrymen’s camp all the way towards the toll bridge and the wishing well, but we haven’t yet considered the old mines. Perhaps Eris has been taking up refuge down there whilst we’ve been running around like headless chicken.’

Happy sounded so serious as he sat on the hood of the yellow bug. The map of Storybrooke was clutched between his paws making him look more adorable than anything else. Emma leaned against the driver’s door, staring off into the distance or glancing over at her companion every now and then.

She hadn’t driven her precious bug in all of three years and she had yet to figure out how she was going to move it from its spot in front of Granny’s diner. It might have been unwise to leave it there,
parked in the street for the month that she was gone, but she hadn’t thought about the fact that she might have motion sickness in the near future and be cursing the day that transportation was ever invented.

Today Emma had once again opted for her red leather jacket with a grey tank top and a pair of jeans. She felt a little more practical now than she had been in the clothes that she had acquired in the Enchanted Forest. Now she felt like she could fit in more with the town and the world around her.

‘—and probably...’ Happy trailed off when he noticed Emma’s distant look. ‘Emma, are you even listening to me?’

The blonde’s head shot up towards the yellow feline, eyes wild and wide. ‘Wha—Oh, yeah. Totally listening.’ Emma grimaced at Happy’s pointed look and tilted her head to the side, ‘But, just incase you weren’t listening yourself, why don’t you repeat what you said so I can make sure that you know what we were discussing.’

Happy rolled his eyes and began to roll up the paper. ‘This is getting us nowhere,’ sighed the feline. ‘Maybe we should call Mr. Dad or Mrs. Mom to help us? We shouldn’t go looking for Eris without them.’

‘No. Come on, Happy,’ whined Emma, crossing her arms stubbornly over her chest. ‘I don’t want to drag them into this anymore than I already have.’

‘Well, I don’t think Eris is going to care what you want either way, Em,’ deadpanned Happy.

Emma released a labored sigh and pushed herself off the bug. As much as she hated to admit it, Happy was right. Whether or not Emma wanted to involve her family, Eris was going to do whatever she wanted and most likely get whatever she wanted. The chance of people getting hurt in the process was as high as Emma was going to make it.

‘Maybe I should just give her what she wants.’

‘What?’

‘I said—’

‘No, I heard you the first time. I was giving you the chance to change your answer to one that was less stupid.’

‘Look, little buddy,’ Emma lifted her hand to rub the back of her neck. ‘She always gets what she wants and it all depends on me how many people get hurt in the process. If I give her what she wants, then no one will get hurt.’

‘You two made a deal that she can’t hurt anyone—’

‘When has she ever not found a loophole in our deals?’

Slumping her shoulders, the dragon leaned forward on the bug’s hood and stared down into her companion’s green eyes. The tears were already starting to form and his lip was starting to tremble. It wasn’t fair to him that she was just giving in, after all he was the one who continuously picked her up after having fallen into Eris’s hands. Any encounter with Eris took its toll on Happy as much as it did Emma, and as much as she wished that she could spare him she knew that there was no stopping the inevitable.

‘Happy, I know this is hard—’
'No!' Happy hissed. 'No, you don’t know. I have to watch that—that—that monster take what she wants from you and then I’m the one that has to put all the pieces back together. It’s not fair to me and it’s not fair that you have to go through that pain.'

‘Little buddy—’

‘Don’t “Little buddy” me. You’re not just giving up,’ Happy crossed his little arms over his chest, tightening his grip around the map. ‘Not this time. This time we have Mr. Dad and Mrs. Mom and Regina and Henry. We’re going to stop Eris and you won’t ever have to let her come near you ever again.’

Not having the heart to tell the poor creature that his hope was misplaced, that fighting against a goddess was a horrible decision and would likely end in the deaths of countless innocent people. Instead Emma simply reached up and petted gently between his ears and offered him the best fake smile that she muster.

‘Okay. We’ll try.’

Happy beamed from cheek to cheek before unrolling the map once more and returning to inspect the contents inside.

Emma’s attention was diverted to her cellphone as it began to chime in her jeans pocket. Checking the caller ID, she blew out an almost relieved breath. If Belle was calling then it meant she had found something.

‘Belle,’ greeted Emma. ‘What’s up?’

‘Emma, I need you to come down to the library.’ A pause. ‘We have a situation.’

* 

‘Oh, bloody hell.’

This was arguably the best day of Emma’s life. Will Scarlet, the annoying little Irish-man who had gotten the best of her at least four times, was lying down in one of the jail cell’s cot’s and sported a lovely bruise on his eye. It must have been some party he had thrown in the library if he had several bottles of whiskey around him and gotten injured in the process as well.

‘Good morning, sunshine,’ greeted Emma in a sing-song voice before she leaned against the cell bars.

Behind her Belle, David and Elsa were paging through the translations of the latin books the redhead woman had made. Happy was laying flat on his stomach atop David’s head, but no one seemed to pay the yellow feline any mind.

‘Haven’t seen you since my last trip to Wonderland,’ Emma pointed out, her smirk ever growing. ‘When you left Happy and me to deal with a flock of jubjubs on my own.’

‘I hope there’s no hard feelings, mate.’

Emma continued to smirk at the man despite her right eyebrow twitching in annoyance. As much as she wanted to shove something up the smug man’s behind, she took solace in the fact that he was the one behind bars and without his precious alcohol.

‘You still happen to have that jubjubs egg I managed to snatch? Perhaps the gold you got from
“tradin’ it in the market?”

Opting to change the subject, Emma pressed her head against the cell bars before she spoke again, ‘Wanna tell me why you broke into the library last night?’

‘The what?’ Will sounded confused, as though he was still disoriented. Emma knew it was a possibility due to the fact that he was still hungover. ‘Oh, that’s what that place was? I just thought it was a poorly stocked pub.’

‘Okay, as satisfying as this is after the four times you’ve screwed me over, leaving me for dead—’

‘It was five times if I remember correctly.’

‘I have better things to do—’

‘Are you sure ’bout that? You seem to quite fancy me company, mate.’

‘First of all, I’m gay. Second, You are definitely not the person I would choose if I had to pick a guy,’ Emma glared at the man, her mirth being replaced by annoyance. ‘I get it, every town needs a village idiot. But your little stunt pulled me away from an important investigation. Start talking, before I show you what happens when you piss off someone who can turn into a dragon.’

‘The last thing I remember is running away from Robin Hood and his lot of bafoons, and then I celebrated my escape with a nice bottle of whiskey. Or several, it’s a tad fuzzy to me.’

‘Why were you running from forest boy?’

‘Many reasons; the main one being we gave each other matching shiners. Kind of like the equivalent of friendship bracelets.’

This intrigued Emma. She supposed it was wrong to be enjoying the fact that Robin had a black eye to match Will’s, but she also found herself reveling in that fact.

‘This was on you in the library.’

Emma held up a book with the title Alice in Wonderland. Will glanced towards her and was on his feet in seconds the moment his eyes landed on the blue hardback.

‘This was in your pocket.’ The blonde directed to a page of the red queen in her other hand. ‘Still hung up on queenie, I see?’

Will narrowed his eyes and clenched his jaw, but didn’t lose his temper. He merely gave as good as he received, ‘Could say the same about you. What with Robin Hood out of the way it’s quite easy to move in on his girl, isn’t it?’

In a quick, rapid movement, Emma grasped onto Will’s shirt and yanked him forward. The man’s head slammed into the cell bars and he cried out in pain. The sound, however, was muffled by the man himself, lest he wanted to invoke Emma’s wrath anymore than he already had. Judging by her green slitted eyes, he feared it may be a tad bit too late for that.

‘Careful, Knave,’ warned Emma. ‘My mood is rather testy and I wouldn’t want you to be the first tally I write on my wall. Most people would prefer it if your ticker still tocks.’

‘I would prefer it too,’ informed Will, chuckling hesitantly.

Emma released the thief and blinked once. When she opened her eyes again they had returned to
their normal appearance. She fished for the cell keys in her pocket and proceeded to unlock the door.

‘Now, thankfully, Belle hadn’t pressed any charges and I would rather be upset if I were to be the result of taking Robin Hood’s nuisance of the streets,’ Emma shoved the book into Will’s chest along with the page of the red queen. ‘From one street rat to another, don’t get caught.’

Will smirked at her, ‘Aye, sir.’

Emma watched in amusement as the blond made a hasty retreat from the station, and as much as she disliked the man she figured that a clean slate was in order if he continued to be a nuisance to Robin Hood. She disliked him more than she ever could Will Scarlet and thus the man trumped the common thief.

‘Emma,’ Happy called over to her, moving into a sitting position atop David’s head. He wasn’t even looking at her, all of his focus directed towards a page in his hand. ‘You need to hear this.’

‘Okay, but you guys have to make it quick. You and I need to head out again, little buddy.’

‘The books we’ve been scouring through hasn’t been helpful thus far,’ informed Belle, looking up from her note book as she leaned across the desk. ‘However, I’ve been going through some scrolls I found in Rumple’s shop and translated them from Ancient Greek. They all refer to the same thing; Eris wanting a child.’

‘Well, she has several of them,’ frowned Emma. ‘Or had... over the past several centuries.’

‘Yes, but here it says that she wishes to have a child with a being pure of heart; a savior,’ Belle winced at her words and so did both Happy and David. ‘To do this she requires a willing partner and, in order to become fertile, the Apple of Discord.’

Suddenly, a feeling came over Emma as her mind automatically went back to Henry’s birthday celebration.

Noctua.

The fact that the loft seemed practically untouched even if Eris’s presence was still lingering in the air.

Eris wanted a kid. Her kid, in fact.

Only one word came to Emma in that moment:

‘Shit.’

Wonderland—Past

Emma’s lungs were burning as she raced through the woods. Happy was attacked to her back, clinging onto his companion for dear life. Next to them ran Will Scarlet, the reason why they were fleeing for their life in the first place.

Behind them, trees and plants gave way to the swarm of jubjubs on their heels, screeching as though they were possessed by Hades himself.

Now, Emma was in no way scared of anything. However, anything that could devour a mock turtle at the speed of lightning and only leave behind its bones was not something that she wanted to brawl against. Or even remotely spent a minute of her time in their proximity.
‘I’m going to kill you, Will!’ Emma bellowed as she continued to rival the speed of a furie. ‘I told you to stick to the path and you chose to ignore me!’

‘How was I to know there’d be a swarm of these vile creatures waiting for us?!’

‘If you’d bothered to read the warning signs, just like I had, you would have!’

‘Will the two of you shut up and keep on running!’ Happy reprimanded them furiously, moving helplessly up on Emma’s strong shoulders. ‘If you had somehow forgotten, there are thousands of flesh-eating birds gaining on us as we argue. I don’t know about you two idiots, but I’ve eaten too little fishies to die now!’

‘We’re not dying,’ growled the dragon, wishing that she was a little fitter than she currently was. Especially when her lungs were threatening to give out and collapse into her stomach. ‘I’ve got a hot date with a fire nymph and I’m not missing my chance of tapping that because of some stupid birds!’

Will laughed in amusement, ‘You know, some people raise their kids without havin’ ‘emm hear all about their sex life.’

‘She’s/I’m not my/his parent!’

‘Woah, jeez! Struck a nerve have I?’

‘Will, just. Shut. Up!’

They ran until they could no more, breaking through the tree line just before they nearly sent themselves flying over the edge. The three stared down frantically at the long drop, their eyes wide and filled with fear. The sound of the jubjubs approaching was ever present in their ears.

Jafar’s tower loomed in the distance and Emma suddenly found herself wishing that she was rather locked in one of his dungeons than facing thousands of pests that had a knack for human flesh.

‘We’re dead!’ Happy exclaimed, grabbing into his ears and pulled with all his might as he floated up into the air. ‘We’re dead, we’re dead, we’re dead!’

‘Yeah, I, uh, didn’t want to do this,’ declared Will, placing his hands onto his hips. ‘But I’m ‘fraid I have no choice.’

Emma narrowed her eyes and slowly began to turn her head towards the Knave of Hearts. ‘What are you talking about?’

‘Catch!’ The man shouted as he reached for something in his leather jacket and then tossing it into Emma’s hands. Will then leapt over the edge to disappear into the trees down below.

Emma glanced down into her hand and her eyes widened at the sight of a jubjubs egg. It would be the reason why they knew where to follow them around every corner they had tried to disappear behind after the past hour of fleeing. If one could get away with such an item, it could make one as rich as a king if traded on the black market.

‘Bastard!’ Emma exclaimed furiously, glancing up at Happy. ‘He had it with him this whole time!’

‘So what do we do now?!’

A growl escaped the dragon, ‘Now, I roast a few chickens, ultimately missing my rendezvous.’

Happy and Emma turned towards the oncoming storm. The egg in Emma’s grasp disappeared and
flames took its place.
Chapter Notes

So, thank the heavens, my knee is gonna be just fine. I’m so happy that I could cry.

Anyways, I remember seeing a comment about misspelling rendezvous. I want to say thank you for the commenter because I don’t have anyone to proofread for me and I do it myself, so the chance is there that I’ll miss something.

The last time Emma was down in Regina’s vault was during their last magical lesson together. The one where the latter nearly killed her by collapsing the bridge underneath her. It was strange how everything was practically still the same when it felt as though Emma had changed a lot in her time away. She was still the same ass kicking Bail Bonds woman and the orphan savior who hadn’t a clue as to what she was doing, but Emma didn’t feel like an amateur anymore. In fact, she was probably more prepared to handle magical creatures than the great sorceress who had begun her magical training.

Regina wasn’t exactly thrilled to hear of their discovery regarding Eris’s plans. The blonde couldn’t exactly put her finger on it as to why the brunette would be filled with such unadulterated rage at the thought of Eris and herself producing a little bundle of chaos, but it was safe to say that there was one thing that flashed clearly in Regina’s eyes:

Murder.

Emma wasn’t even going to try and read into what it could possibly mean. She herself had to deal with a seductress goddess who wanted to be her baby mama and Regina had that whole soulmate thing going on with Robin, who was a married man. Their lives were complicated as it were and they could barely even go a few sentences without picking a fight of some sort. Hell, Emma was lucky enough that Regina granted her access to what books she possessed on gods and goddesses.

The best way to try and stop Eris was gather as much information on the goddess as possible. However, no matter how many books Emma scoured she had this inkling feeling that this was all for not. The savior knew Eris inside and out, intimately as well, and she knew practically everything humanly possible about her. If Eris wanted a baby with her, then Emma was only delaying the inevitable.

A baby demigod, and one with the powers combined of Eris and the savior herself, was doomed to a life of constant violence. Like Emma herself, the infant wouldn’t have a choice in its destiny. No matter if it wanted a normal life, to grow up and buy a house with a white picket fence, it would always have something or someone chasing them. Not to mention, demigods rarely had happy endings.

‘—since you are a sorceress yourself, I trust that you will abide by the rules I have set out before you, Emma.’ Regina stopped in her tracks, in the room that was littered with hundreds of bookcases.

Emma’s eyes widened in panic, suddenly hyper aware of the fact that whilst they had been entering deeper into the brunette’s vault she had been laying down a set of rules that she and Happy needed to abide by during their research.
And shit.

Regina was definitely going to kick her out if she knew that she hadn’t listened to a single word.

So, naturally, Emma decided to do something stupid; attempt at playing it cool.

‘I’m not an idiot, Regina,’ reassured Emma. ‘I’m not an amateur when it comes to magic and stuff. You can relax.’

‘It is when I let my guard down when you decide to do something idiotic, Miss Swan,’ scoffed Regina. ‘So, no. I will not simply relax.’

Rolling her eyes, Emma shared a brief look with Happy. The feline seemed to be thinking along the same lines as herself:

Is she serious right now?

‘Thanks for the books, Regina,’ Emma nodded her head towards all of the hardbacks in front of them. ‘But I think we got it from here.’

‘Yes, I have to return to working on Marian, the problem which you created.’

And with that the queen turned on her heels and stalked out of the room. Heat rose from Emma’s belly, all the way up to her chest, the fire glowing behind her skin. Just before she could unleash it on the undeserving collection of literature, she shut her mouth and extinguished the fire building in her and exhaling the smoke through her nose.

‘I’ve never met a bigger pain in the ass than that damned woman,’ hissed Emma, clenching her fists and doing her best to pierce the skin with her nails. ‘Once—Just once, I’d like to wipe that smug, posh look off her face.’

‘You can do that after we stop Eris,’ informed Happy. ‘We have a lot of books to go through and we’re helping Belle and Elsa baby sit little baby Neal tonight.’

Emma nodded her head in agreement, ‘Then, let’s get started, little buddy.’

*

It was quite amusing to see Mary Margaret and David going back and forth whether or not they were going out for the evening. Belle heard bits and pieces of their negotiations and she was inclined to agree that their track record with their children wasn’t exactly spot on. Elsa seemed just as amused by their interactions as she was.

Together Belle and Elsa sat on the Charming’s bed entertaining baby Neal with silly faces and ice magic whilst Mary Margaret and David continued on with their strange debate.

One thing was for certain, Belle needed the time away from Rumple as much as the parents needed time away from the baby. She loved Rumple and she truly believed that he could become a better person, however, in the time that they had been married Belle had begun to slowly realize that she had spent so much time helping him find his way that she hadn’t thought about finding her own.

A deep sigh escaped Belle, which did not go unnoticed by Elsa nor Neal. The baby suddenly ceased his giggling and stared up at the red head woman, tilting his head to the side and making a curious huh sound.
'Is everything alright?' Elsa questioned worriedly, collecting Neal from Belle’s arms and cradling him in her own. ‘You seem a little preoccupied.’

Belle forced a fake smile and straightened her spine, refocusing her attention on Neal.

Elsa was practically a complete stranger to her and she didn’t want to bother the woman with her minuscule problems.

She shouldn’t even be unhappy. Being with Rumple was all she had ever wanted for such a long time and she should be grateful that he was changing to become a better man for herself and for their future.

‘I’m multitasking,’ Belle lied, rather poorly she might add, but Elsa didn’t seem to notice. ‘Trying to think of anything else we could try to find your sister and scouring through some of the books I’ve memorized over the years in order to help find a solution to Emma’s goddess problem. I admit that I should have chosen a better time for it.’

‘No, no,’ Elsa shook her head in reassurance. ‘I understand, it’s quite alright.’ The queen offered a brief smile before looking down at Neal in her arms. ‘I have yet to thank you for your help in trying to find Anna. It means a lot to me and it will surely mean a lot to her once we find her.’

Belle smiled weakly, inclining her head. ‘Don’t thank me. It’s my job as the town’s local bookworm that I scour through as many books as possible to help handle the latest crisis. I’m quite used to it by now.’

‘Nevertheless, everyone appreciates what you do,’ Elsa glanced up into Belle’s blue eyes. ‘Even if they forget to say thank you once in a while.’

*

It was barely half an hour and Emma wanted to kill herself.

She had never been one for reading or studying for that matter, not even when she had magical glasses to help her cheat through most of the books on the shelves. Happy was much more dedicated than herself, but he wasn’t one for studying that much either. They both learned a lot better if they were shown how to perform magic or if someone read the books for them.

The dragon and exceed were together on the floor of the library with several books sprawled out next to them or stacked into large towers. Emma was seated with her legs crossed and a hardback cradled in her lap, black framed gale reading glasses perched on her nose, whilst Happy lay on his stomach with his arms crossed and his feet swinging back and forth as he continued to read.

Thus far, they had only come across most of Eris’s powers and what she used the Golden Apple of Discord for, but there was nothing about weaknesses.

Emma didn’t know what she expected. Even if the goddess’s flaws had been recorded throughout history, she would have just erased them and the people who had known from existence. Eris was many things, but an idiot was not one of them.

‘This is stupid,’ Emma announced, scowling at the book in her hands as she slammed it shut. ‘We’re not going to find anything in here even if we stood on our heads and began to chant praises to the gods.’

‘You’re just annoyed because you don’t like schoolwork,’ Happy teased without even glancing up at his companion. ‘Stop being lazy, keep quiet and let’s at least try to hit the hour mark.’
Emma scowled at her companion, tossing the book aside and proceeding to lie down on her back as she sprawled her limbs out like a starfish.

She heard Happy exhale in frustration before he too shut his book.

A moment later, the furry feline was seated next to her with his arms and legs crossed. He looked more annoyed than anything else, but he looked much too adorable to have Emma take him seriously. She barely even managed to swallow the laugh the bubbled in her throat.

‘If this is another self-loathing thing where you say you should just give into whatever Eris wants, then I’m going to slap you.’ Happy was full out scowling now, trying to understand what was going on with his best friend.

Emma inhaled and exhaled deeply. She was supposed to be the pseudo parent, not the other way around. Happy wasn’t supposed to be bothered with any of this.

The poor thing didn’t even have the chance of a childhood. It was constant training, training, fighting monsters and completing quests, and some more training.

‘No, it’s not that,’ mumbled Emma, crossing her arms over her chest and continued to stare up at the ceiling. ‘I don’t want to continue this messy, toxic thing with Eris, and I don’t want to have a baby with her. Or a baby at all right now. Maybe in the future when I’m in a healthy relationship with a woman I wholeheartedly love, but not like this.’

Happy’s green orbs softened and Emma thought for a moment that he was going to start sobbing or something because he appeared so emotional.

On some level he was probably feeling her pain as well. Happy could see how this was affecting her and knew that she was afraid of being unable to control herself. She didn’t put it past him to know that she wanted a better future for any child she had than that of a demigod’s.

‘Okay, you seem pretty sure that Eris is going to win,’ huffed Happy, keeping his posture as he stared intensely at Emma. ‘If she does manipulate you again and you two end up having a baby, then we’ll... I don’t know... we’ll buy a new house here in Storybrooke, since Mr. Dad and Mrs. Mom have baby Neal to worry about, and we’ll raise that baby to be strong and brave and a hero just like you are. We’ll protect baby Emma as best we can and we’ll fight tooth and nail for his or her future, because we don’t give up on someone or give into a situation when it looks the bleakest. We’re family, we’re a team. Right?’

And how could Emma say no to that reassuring and serious face?

Emma grinned despite herself, a genuine honest expression of happiness and joy, ‘Right, little buddy.’ The blonde paused for a moment as she began to sit up. ‘Where did you learn to be so smart, huh?’

‘Henry and I are really good friends,’ explained Happy, his face contorting into a mischievous smile. ‘When you gave birth to him, you must have given him all the braincells you had.’

‘Oi!’

Ignoring Emma’s scowl, the exceed turned to look towards the books around them. His expression turned serious once more.

‘Do you want to continue looking through these books or do you wanna go home and help baby sit your little brother?’
Emma took off the gale glasses and tucked it inside her jacket.

‘The latter sounds a lot more appealing. We can just continue going through these books tomorrow or we’ll ignore the Eris problem for a little longer whilst we help Elsa find her sister. We’ve been slacking on that front a little bit and I feel guilty.’

Happy nodded his head in understanding before getting to his feet.

‘We should probably put these books away before Regina throws a fireball at our heads.’

The blonde scoffed before snapping her fingers. Suddenly, the books they had been using flew off the ground and returned to the places it had been before she and Happy had gotten their hands on them.

‘Please, with her luck she’ll end up throwing bunnies at us instead of fire, Happy.’

‘Cockiness killed the cat and the dragon.’

‘It’s curiosity that killed the cat, little buddy.’

‘I’m not curious enough to find out if Regina can throw a fireball or not.’

‘...’ Emma pinched the bridge of her nose. ‘Never mind.’

The ascension of the staircase to the main area of the vault was filled with silence. Happy had already made himself comfortable on Emma’s shoulder, pleasantly exhausted from the day of continuously trying to find ways of putting a stop to Eris’s plans. The furry seemed just about ready to fall asleep on Emma then and there.

Emma discovered Regina on the floor of her vault, paging through some sort of magical book. A feeling of guilt shot through Emma’s stomach when it once again dawned on her that the woman had to solve Marian’s predicament alone. She would have offered Happy’s assistance if she wasn’t afraid that Regina would end up killing her companion.

‘Hey,’ Emma called out, gaining Regina’s attention.

For a moment she hesitated at Regina’s tired gaze, finding the woman more beautiful than she cared to admit in that moment.

‘We’re pretty exhausted and haven’t exactly found anything of any use, so we’re going to head home. We’re supposed to be helping Belle and Elsa babysit.’

‘Yes, well, goodnight then,’ Regina sounded a lot more defeated than Emma had ever heard her before.

Another shot of guilt suddenly shot through Emma as she and the brunette continued to simply stare at one another.

‘Henry’s sleeping over at Nicholas’s, so I don’t need to go home. I’ll just remain here, wasting my time as I amount to absolutely nothing.’

‘No,’ Emma shook her head in disagreement. ‘You must have gotten somewhere by now?’

‘I’m afraid not,’ sighed Regina, pinching the bridge of her nose. ‘This is ancient magic that I’m not familiar with. Eris is far more powerful than I anticipated her to be and I’m afraid I’ve underestimated her. What in the name of the gods possessed you to become familiar with her, I will never be able to
understand.’

Emma’s eyebrows shot up, but instead of the stinging feeling that she usually felt at Regina’s jabs, the feeling of amusement that overcame her at her own stupidity was warm and welcoming.

She needed to laugh about the entire situation or she was going to kill herself.

‘Yeah, she’s not exactly the brightest crayon in the box,’ added Happy, smirking in amusement.

Regina glanced up at Happy’s words and for the first time in what was most likely three months, she offered the feline a genuine smile.

‘I would be inclined to agree with that, yes.’

The brunette shut the book in her hands and turned her attention towards Emma.

‘From your current demeanor, I’m deducting that you haven’t found anything of value?’ The sorceress raised an inquiring eyebrow as she spoke.

Shrugging her shoulders, slightly disturbing Happy in the process, Emma shook her head.

‘Eris is the most paranoid person I’ve ever met, next to you of course,’ informed Emma, cracking a teasing smile. ‘Constantly thinking everyone else is scheming against her. Any weakness about her that would have been recorded was most likely erased from the books. If there had been something about her once upon a time, then it certainly isn’t there anymore, but it can’t hurt to keep trying, right?’

‘She does sound awfully familiar to me,’ Regina cracked her own smile.

For a moment Emma thought that it wouldn’t be so bad if she came clean to Regina then and there, that the reason she left was because she was in love with the sorceress even if she knew that she could never love her back. Perhaps then they could both somehow be on the path of mending their emotional wounds. However, Emma forced herself to sober up, emotionally pulling away from the conversation. Regina and Happy seemed to noticed despite Emma’s attempt in hiding it.

‘We’ll see you around, Madam Mayor,’ Emma bid farewell and turned to leave.

She could feel Happy’s narrowed eyes trained on the side of her head, but she wasn’t particularly interested in his opinion in all of this. Before she could leave, however, it appeared as though Regina had other plans.

‘Emma, wait...’

Not being able to refuse the brunette, Emma released a labored sigh and turned towards Regina. The blonde shoved her hands into her jacket’s pockets and stared expectantly.

‘I honestly don’t like the tension between us,’ admitted Regina, wringing her hands together nervously in a very un-Regina-like manner. ‘Not only is it affecting me, but it’s affecting Henry too. He’s constantly moping around the house, barely even looking my way. He doesn’t come right out and say it, but he blames me for the time you’ve been away. Personally, I blame myself as well.’

‘Regina—’

‘No, please just listen,’ Regina was pleading now and Emma wanted to put the woman out of her misery then and there. The queen was not someone to beg for something, it was beneath her stature.
‘I simply cannot take it any longer. I refuse to.’

Emma’s jaw and fists clenched. Anger boiled forth and it took all of her energy to try and suppress an involuntary transformation.

‘You "refuse" to?’

The dragon was livid.

She merely saw red as she stared at the woman before her. The woman who had forced herself into her heart and then tossed her away as though their budding friendship had meant nothing because she needed someone to blame for her life going up in ruins.

‘What can’t you take anymore Regina? The fact that I’m ignoring you or the fact that I don’t want you to be in my life anymore?’

‘You don’t—You can’t mean that—’

‘Why not?’ spat Emma, her nostrils flaring as the fire began to stew in her belly. ‘Why can’t I mean that? You tossed me away like everyone else has done in my life.’ The heat began to rise all the way to her chest and threatened to erupt. ‘I didn’t want to hurt you, and I apologized more times than I could even count—’

‘Emma!’ Happy suddenly exclaimed.

In an instant, the blonde relaxed and any trace of her dragonic form vanished. She turned her head towards the exceed, eyes filled with shame and regret.

‘Stop it. Stop being a stubborn mule and lashing out because you’re hurt. It’s why we’re in this mess with Eris in the first place.’

Emma clenched her jaw, but nodded her head in understanding. The dragon unclenched her fists and forced herself to calm down, if only for a little bit. She glanced towards Regina, who still seemed to be uncharacteristically nervous. It was wrong of her to intentionally hurt Regina, and even though it hurt her in the process, Emma simply didn’t care. She had more important things to worry about then some misplaced affection that was three years old.

‘Goodnight, Regina.’

Without waiting for a response, Emma curtly turned around and stalked off, ignoring Regina’s attempt to call her back.

*

‘I’m walking due north. Now what?’

Going off on an evening stroll, her hatred for Eris, Marian and anyone else in her mind who she thought deserved it only growing.

Regina wasn’t someone to pine after someone or be upset about the fact that someone she cared for was ignoring her. It was beneath her. However, here she was, her heart yearning for Emma to look at her for more than five minutes without those sad, angry and lonely eyes that she had when she first came to town.

It wasn’t like Regina didn’t deserve Emma’s anger. She had distributed her own much too eagerly
towards the savior when Marian had first set foot in this time. Any attempt of having a meaningful
conversation with Emma had been shot down, and Regina would never have even broached the
subject if Henry didn’t look like a kicked puppy who practically dragged his ears on the ground.

Tracking down Eris with Sidney’s aid was the best she could do to process her anger instead of
going on a rampage through Storybrooke. It might not particularly go as she planned anyways and
Regina would most likely turn everyone into garden gnomes that talk rather than burn down house
after house.

‘Head past the toll bridge, then go East,’ informed Sidney from his place inside Regina’s pocket
mirror. ‘Eris isn’t far now.’

Regina released a huff before shutting the mirror and returning it to her pocket. She didn’t
particularly enjoy the perverted genie popping up in every mirror that she stared into. It was by
accident that she had turned Sidney back into the magical mirror that he had once been. Regina
didn’t particularly regret it after he simply continued to push and push her buttons, but she soon did a
few days later.

‘—we’re not lost, okay? I know exactly where we’re going.’

‘Why can’t we just teleport back to the loft? Then, you wouldn’t need to “know exactly where we’re
going”.’

Regina froze where she stood.

She proceeded to roll her eyes when the exact person she was trying to push out of her mind
appeared from behind the bushes a few feet away.

It was just Regina’s luck that Emma and Happy was not at the Charming’s loft, but instead roaming
the forest.

‘Regina,’ acknowledged Emma, seemingly shocked in seeing the brunette when she distinctly
remembered her being located at her vault merely an hour ago. ‘What are you doing here?’

‘I could ask you the same thing, Miss Swan,’ the sorceress placed her hands on her hips. ‘Please tell
me that you did not in fact managed to get yourselves hopelessly lost?’

‘We’re not lost!’ hissed Emma indignantly. ‘I know this town like the back of my own hand.’

‘Sure, you do,’ scoffed Happy. ‘We’ve been walking in circles for the past hour, Emma.’

‘That’s impossible,’ retorted Emma, crossing her arms stubbornly over her chest. ‘My gut’s been
telling me to keep going in the direction I am the entire time.’

Regina and Happy both frowned at this statement. The sorceress could tell by just looking at the
exceed seated on Emma’s shoulder that there was clearly something off by her behavior. It was true,
Emma did know Storybrooke like the back of her hand. Not better than Regina herself, but if they
were to compete then Emma would most likely come close.

‘Unless,’ Happy intervened, staring worriedly at his friend. ‘Eris must be calling out to you. Even
with the cuff, you’re still able to be manipulated by her. She must want to talk to you.’

‘That or she’s just messing with my head,’ grumbled Emma in annoyance. ‘Why can’t my life just be
normal for like five seconds.’ The blonde woman stuffed her hands into her pockets and opted to
frown at Regina. ‘What about you, Regina? Nature walks your new thing?’
‘I intend to force Eris’s hand,’ explained Regina, narrowing her eyes at Emma with a look that told her that she didn’t need to explain herself. ‘Make her reverse the effects she had on Marian.’

‘That’s a stupid idea if I’ve ever heard one before,’ deadpanned Emma. ‘You don’t hold a candle to her and you have no magic to defend yourself. Were you planning on filling me in on this idiotic plan or were you waiting until I had to tell Henry his mother was killed because of her own stupidity?’

‘You weren’t exactly in the best mood to listen to anything I had to say, Miss Swan.’

‘I’ve never shot you down when you needed help with something,’ scowled the dragon. ‘I can pull up my big girl pants and prioritize when it comes to your safety and everyone else’s. You’re the mother of my kid, Regina.’ Emma paused for a moment, her scowl not waining as she watched a guilty expression overcome the brunette. ‘How do you even know where she is?’

The sorceress took it upon herself to declare it her turn to scowl, playing tit-for-tat with the infuriating blonde that stood in front of her.

‘Attempting to explain my magic to a beginner is a waste of my time,’ hissed Regina. ‘She’s east of the toll bridge.’

Regina took note of Emma once again clenching her jaw and fists, but if the blonde wasn’t going to allow them to talk like mature adults then she was going to continue sending jabs her way until there was some agreement struck. It was childish and Regina knew this, but she was out of options by now.

The dragon took a deep breath and blew the smoke form her nostrils for what was most likely the umpteenth time that night. Regina wished that Emma would rather lose her temper than not say anything at all. The sorceress supposed that this is what it must have felt like for Emma whilst she was begging Regina to at least shout at and call her an idiot rather than ignore her.

‘I’ll go with then,’ Emma nodded her head which prompted Happy to nod his as well. ‘Even if I wanted to go back to the loft, Eris would just continuously redirect my weak mind until I gave in and went to see her. To be honest I’d feel better if I didn’t have to face her alone.’

‘And what am I?’ scoffed Happy. ‘Chopped chimera?’

‘No, you’d be a lot more tasty, I’d assume,’ Emma smirked. The blonde turned back towards Regina. ‘Come on, the sooner we find her, the sooner I get to have a long overdue chat with the crazy psychopath that wants to have my kid.’
Good mornig, dearies.

Important Chapter Notes

No notes other than thanking you all for the wonderful kudos, comments and bookmarks.

Also, we have a special guest star in the chapter today. If someone can guess who they are and from what Disney movie before Thursday, I will post an extra chapter on Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on when you guys figure it out.

Enjoy!

‘That was Emma,’ Belle announced, re-entering the living room. ‘She, Happy and Regina are chasing down a lead regarding Eris. So, they won’t be helping us babysit Neal this evening.’

Elsa was seated on the floor, baby Neal sprawled on his stomach on his blanket as he blew raspberries as loudly as his small human body could manage. The queen glanced up at the redheaded woman, appearing a tad bit disappointed. Belle supposed that the woman had been looking forward to spending time with the blonde and her exceed companion.

‘Well, I suppose that’s a good thing, isn’t it?’ reasoned Elsa. ‘Regina and Emma getting along for once.’

Belle pursed her lips, doubting that that was the case here. In the past few weeks that she and Emma had interacted, each time the blonde made it quite clear of her standing with Regina. The redhead never got her as far as opening up about her feelings or to go as far as going into detail about everything that transpired between them. Belle respected the savior’s privacy and allowed Emma to set the pace of their strange friendship that had begun to develop ever since she and Happy came to Storybrooke.

‘Well, any time that they do not strangle one another during an interaction is progress,’ Belle took a seat opposite the ice queen and grabbed hold of Neal’s little feet, resuming her process of entertaining the small Charming. ‘From what Emma told me and from what I’ve heard they weren’t exactly fond of one another when she first came to town.’

‘Though that had come a far way since then, surely they can mend their differences to get there once more.’

‘I hope so,’ agreed Belle with a sad smile. ‘Though Emma has made it abundantly clear that she had screwed Regina over and once that happens then you can not get them back, according to her at least.’

Elsa shook her head adamantly, ‘I don’t believe that. Perhaps there is something we could do to help them?’
‘And risk being *eaten* by Emma? She is a dragon, you know this.’

‘I doubt that she would consume us, but you do have a point.’

*

So, to recap the following events:

*One.* Sidney was trapped in Regina’s mirror because she accidentally lost control of her magic.

*Two.* Regina had plans to kill Marian.

*Three.* Sidney was a psychotic bastard who led them right into Eris’s trap.

*Four.* They were probably going to die and Emma had no one to instruct to delete her internet search history.

*Five.* Oh, shit...

‘You lied to me,’ accused Emma, snarling at the brunette. ‘You said you didn’t have a clue where Sidney was! He was in your mirror this whole time?!’

‘Maybe I did. So what? I don’t have to tell you everything I’m doing.’

‘I kind of think that that’s exactly what you should do when we’re about to fall off a cliff!’

‘Well, you and the misbegotten offspring of an alley cat and a bobblehead can fly. What difference does it make to you?’

‘I *can’t* fly! Only when I’m in my dragon form, and it takes a lot of energy to do that!’

The ice bridge beneath their feet was shaking, the gush wind that had picked up from nowhere was strong enough to blow them off. In fact, Emma was quite certain that Happy had been blown off the second that she and Regina had crouched down on their knees.

**Priorities, Swan. Happy will be fine.**

Emma was definitely going to strangle Sidney if they made it out of this alive. Or Eris, because really, that woman needed to make up her mind if she wanted Emma dead or be her baby mama. This hot and cold nonsense was a pain in Emma’s ass.

At the sound of ice cracking, Emma turned her head to witness the other end of the ice bridge collapsing. A sound close to a whine nearly escaped the dragon’s throat.

**Five seconds of normality. Is that really too much to ask?**

‘Regina?’

‘Save your moral judgement.’

‘Look!’

The sorceress turned to what Emma was pointing towards, her eyes widening in horror. The floor was literally beginning to evaporate beneath their feet.

Without hesitation, the two women bolted. Their heels clicked against the icy staircase as they
proceeded to outrun the imminent doom that waited for them at the bottom of the ravine. Just before the floor could give way beneath their feet, Emma exclaimed:

‘Jump!’

They narrowly missed the edge, and instead of landing safely on solid ground, they rebounded off the side of the cliff. In the process of falling to their deaths, Emma grasped onto Regina’s hand and the other she shoved into the cliffside. It was a few moments of pure agony, but Emma’s arm eventually began to slow their descent before finally halting them to a sudden stop.

Impenetrable skin did not mean that such immense friction wouldn’t hurt like hell. Especially if it was solid rocks and stones that tore at Emma’s flesh.

Ouch...

‘Ow, ow, ow, ow!’ Emma hissed, shutting her eyes and tightening her grip around Regina’s hand. ‘Gods, that hurts, that hurts, that hurts!’

Momentarily, she forced her focus away from the pain and turned to look downwards at Regina. The sorceress was now holding onto her with both hands, staring down at the ravine below. Emma was aware that whilst she might have survived such a fall, Regina would definitely not have.

‘You okay?’

‘I’m still alive, if that is what you meant.’

‘Thanks for saving me, Emma. Oh, you’re welcome, Regina. I don’t really need this arm anyways.’

‘You’re hilarious, but if it has escaped your notice, we are still dangling over a fifty foot drop.’

‘Yeah, yeah,’ huffed the blonde. ‘Just keep that damn mouth of yours shut and let me focus.’ Emma pulled Regina up effortlessly and motioned for her to wrap her arms around the blonde’s neck. ‘You’ve gotten us in enough trouble as it is.’

Once the brunette was secure, with her arms locked in a tight grip, Emma finally had both her hands to begin their climb upwards.

Emma’s wonderful mood only increased when she took note of the state of her red leather jacket. The arm that she had shoved into the cliff side was now missing an entire sleeve, the material having been torn away. The blonde didn’t know whether to cry, scream or breathe fire, but she was positive it would be none of the above. Mostly since she was considering the possibility of eating Sidney.

Not only would she be avenging her precious baby, but there would be one less pervert in Storybrooke. Next to Whale of course, but Rome wasn’t built in a day.

Patience, Swan, patience.

At the top of the cliff, Emma pulled both her and Regina’s weight over the edge before she collapsed onto the ground with a loud exhale. The sorceress was off her in an instant without so much a word to Emma.

Couldn’t she just sit still for a few seconds as I mourn my clothing?

‘Miss Swan.’

‘...’
‘Emma.’

‘What, Regina? Can’t you see I’m—’

Emma looked up to see Eris standing a few feet in front of them. The goddess was waiting patiently for the blonde to catch up with the turn of events. With her one hand she gripped Happy by the top of his head, her fingers intertwining with the fur there, and the other held a greek dagger to his throat. Cautiously, Emma rose to her feet, her eyes wide and her hands stretched out in surrender.

Recklessness was in her nature. She acted before she thought and even if it did work out in her favor most of the time there was always consequences to bare with. If she did that now, then Happy might lose his life, and that was a risk Emma was not willing to take.

‘What a welcome visit, ladies,’ greeted Eris, glaring at Regina before smiling softly at Emma. ‘I’ve missed our conversation, my love.’

‘Eris, let go of Happy, so we can settle this. Whatever you want, I’ll give it to you—’

‘Emma, no!’ Happy exclaimed in horror. The exceed scowled furiously before he spat, ‘Don’t give her what she—’

Eris pressed the blade closer to Happy’s throat, drawing blood and tainting his yellow fur. Emma dropped to her knees, crying out.

Gods weren’t technically allowed to kill mortals, but magical creatures were not untouchable.

‘Please, Eris, I’ll do as you ask! Just let him go!’

The goddess began to tsk, stalking closer and closer to the two women. She stopped just in front of Emma, tilting her chin upwards with the blade. The goddess smiled down mischievously at the dragon.

‘I told you that I don’t like to share your affections, Em-ma,’ Eris drawled, her eyes briefly flickering towards Regina.

The sorceress was glaring daggers at the goddess, doing her best to see if it was possible to set someone on fire with just a look.

‘The sooner you dispose of the hope that ignites this silly crush, the sooner that we can be together.’ Pausing, Eris turned to smile at Regina. ‘Thank you for bringing me what I needed.’

Eris held her hand out, dropping Happy onto the ground in the process. Emma scrambled forward, pulling Happy right into her arms and holding him close to her breast. The mirror in Regina pocket turned into a shadowy form, floating right into her palm. The goddess took a step back as she smirked briefly, closing her hand around the small object. It disappeared from view once more, morphing into the shadows to somewhere that only Eris knew of.

‘Give me back my mirror, you—’

‘No.’

The dagger in Eris’s grasp evaporated as well as she held the hand out in a gripping motion, proceeding to choke the life from Regina.

‘Stop it!’ Emma roared, setting Happy down and pushed herself forward into a sudden movement.
Emma then tackled the goddess onto the ground. ‘Leave her alone! She doesn’t have anything to do with this!’

‘My, my, Em-ma,’ purred Eris. ‘Still can’t keep your hands off me, I see?’

‘Eris, I don’t want to be with you anymore! Why can’t you just leave me alone?!”

‘Because, my love,’ Eris lifted her head off the ground, staring right into Emma’s green orbs with her red ones. ‘The fates have a plan for the child you and I will have together.’

Emma gritted her teeth, tears of frustration welling up in her eyes.

‘Until our next encounter,’ husked Eris. ‘I assure you, it will be much more pleasant then.’

And with a wave of her hand, Eris’s shadow form disappeared into the night, leaving Emma kneeling on the ground as the tears rolled over her cheeks. The savior crumbled forward, hands gripping the dirt with all her strength.

* 

The Sheriff station was quiet, devoid of any signs of life besides the one occupying the sheriff office. Regina entered cautiously, her usual regal exterior now replaced with turmoil and nervousness. It had been a few hours since Emma had taken off into the night with Happy. The sorceress had gone to the loft only finding the two idiots, the ice queen and the yellow fur ball.

Regina scoffed.

That sounded like the beginnings of a poorly planned joke.

Over the past month, the station had changed much since David took on August and Hook as deputies. The sorceress couldn’t tell exactly how well they were fairing, but she could tell that they had acclaimed their place with in the force in the form of the personal effects that littered their respective desks—Killian’s unkempt with a bottled ship resting on the right hand corner and August’s neat, well organized with a picture of his father in the left hand corner.

Emma was seated by her desk a glass of whiskey in her hand whilst she stared at the half empty bottle in front of her. The savior’s cheeks was a tinge bit red, likely from the alcohol, but she seemed far from drunk. Perhaps a little tipsy, but she was anything but intoxicated. She seemed lost in thought, perhaps haunted even. Happy hadn’t been of much help in explaining where the blonde’s mind was at, but it was obvious to anyone with at least a decent amount of braincells that the events of today had taken quite the toll on Emma.

Next to the bottle of whiskey sat a white filing box. Regina had no clue as to what it contained, but she doubted it had anything to do with her job as sheriff.

The dragon didn’t even glance at Regina as she stopped in the doorway, merely tilted her glass back before slamming it down on the desk. Emma then proceeded to pour herself another glass, sitting back to examine the amber liquid.

‘If you haven’t noticed, Regina, I’m not in the mood to talk to you,’ deadpanned Emma. Her green eyes sought out russet ones, her face unreadable. ‘Go. Away.’

‘I’m a fool.’

Emma raised her eyebrows. ‘Finally, something we can agree on,’ scoffed the dragon, once again
she raised the whiskey to her lips.

‘I’m a fool because I’ve been down this road before,’ Regina pursed her lips, taking a step forward. ‘When I’m hurt, I look to the closest person and blame them. It’s the reason why I had cast the curse in the first place because I couldn’t see things for what they were.’

Again, green met russet, but Emma seemed like she was listening now, hanging on to every word that the brunette was saying.

‘It wasn’t your fault that Robin chose Marian over me, and I shouldn’t have blamed you for it in the first place. I couldn’t see things for what they were and I wanted to hurt you as much as I thought you had hurt me. I’m sorry that I pushed you away, that you thought the only way to dispose of the pain was jumping into a portal and go off galavanting through time. I regretted it the moment I was told you’d left.’

The dragon watched her with pursed lips, seemingly calculating what to do. There was moments in Regina’s life when she had been gut wrenchingly nervous. However, nothing came as close to what she was currently feeling.

Regina watched as Emma closed her eyes then glanced up towards the ceiling. For a moment she thought that the dragon was glaring—perhaps at the gods for whatever reason—but it soon passed when she opened the bottom drawer and retrieved a second glass. Emma proceeded to pour the alcohol before getting to her feet and offering it to Regina. The sorceress accepted the offer, watching as Emma moved her glass around in thought.

‘I think we both made some mistakes and were to blame for what happened back then,’ reasoned Emma.

Hearing Emma talk about their past like it was something that had happened ages ago instead of three months caused Regina more pain than she cared to admit. She had been getting to know Emma, enjoyed her ridiculously bad jokes and sheepish smiles. This woman in front of her now had changed so much. Perhaps she was stronger now, a lot more open with her feelings.

‘I shouldn’t have taken off like what I did,’ sighed Emma. ‘Though if I didn’t, I’m certain that no one would have retrieved me from the bottom of a bottle. Not even my family.’

Regina grimaced at the admission.

‘I’m sorry, Emma,’ whispered Regina, her voice cracking unfamiliarly with emotion. ‘You have no idea how much I regret my actions.’

‘Then, let’s just move on,’ begged Emma. ‘We’re both equally sorry and in equal amount of pain. I can’t go on like this. I’ve been replaying my guilt over and over for the past three years, not to mention, Eris wasn’t exactly a good coping mechanism. Pretty sure she made it even worse.’

The sorceress extended her glass, ‘To moving on?’

Emma clinked their glasses together, offering a broad toothy smile, ‘To moving on.’

*Enchanted Forest—Future: Year??*

Happy thanked the gods for many things, but today he was going to offer an entire school of fish in their honor that Emma’s fever was just that. A completely regular fever that didn’t render her abilities as a dragon to be all over the place. The last time Emma had Dragon Fever they acquired a pesky fly that they couldn’t seem to swat.
The Benbow Inn seemed to meet all of their requirements.

Food, water, all the fire and medicine that they could ever want or need. Not to mention, the accommodation and people weren’t too bad either. The Inn keeper had insisted that she help nurse Emma back to health after what the blonde did to clear passage for the establishments stock and customers.

Emma rarely ever got sick since her immune system is strengthened by her magic. However, future times were difficult if their bodies weren’t adjusted well. If Emma hadn’t taken extra time to help Sarah Hawkins then they would have been on their merry way as fit as fiddles. Though, the dragon wasn’t one to *not* help people.

Currently, they were all located in Sarah’s own bedroom where Emma was in and out of consciousness. Shaking like a leaf in the wind as the inn keeper tried to accommodate the woman with an ice cold napkin on her forehead.

‘Poor thing,’ muttered the brunette, a frown etched on her forehead that added a few more years to her complexion.

The woman was in her late thirties, around Regina’s own age. She had beautiful brown eyes as light as her hazelnut hair.

‘Her temperature just won’t come down. The medicine should have worked by now.’

‘Oh, it has,’ reassured Happy, plopping himself next to his companion, across from Sarah. ‘It’s just going to take a while for it to return to normal... ish. She’s naturally warm by nature. It’s because of her magic.’

Sarah nodded in understanding, moving some of Emma’s hair out of her face. It was clammy with sweat and her eyes were unfocused with hallucinations.

‘Where will you be going on from here?’ The woman questioned glancing from Happy to her task at hand. ‘You know, once Emma has recovered?’

The feline shrugged his shoulders. He himself wasn’t quite sure. They had finished their latest quest and they had been rewarded in their weight of gold coins. The past year Emma had been insisting that each adventure was the last. That she missed her home and that she wanted to finally return. However, she always went back on her word, something troubling her in the past.

‘I don’t know,’ admitted Happy. ‘Emma’s been thinking of going home.’

‘And where is this home?’ Sarah rose a curious eyebrow, a smile playing on her lips. ‘Is it far from here?’

Happy shrugged his shoulders, his green eyes settling on his companion, ‘I couldn’t say. I’ve never been there myself.’ The feline placed his paw over Emma’s in an effort to soothe the tremor that coursed through her entire body. ‘Traveling with Emma, it’s all I’ve ever known. She introduced me to two of her friends a while ago, but we haven’t been to our time in forever.’ He rubbed soothing circles on Emma’s hand, frowning at his companion in concern. ‘She mentions it a lot though; how much she misses her family and friends, her son...’ The feline trailed off and the crinkle between his eyebrows increased. ‘Something bad happened that made her leave, someone she loved hurt her badly.’

‘Oh,’ Sarah’s brows knitted together in concern as she turned back to Emma. ‘I’m sorry, I didn’t know.’
‘She doesn’t like to talk about it, so I don’t know much either,’ reassured Happy, gently patting her sweaty hand. ‘Emma gets really upset whenever I bring it up, so I just ask her all I can about hot cocoa.’

‘It’s hard to imagine Emma anything but smiling,’ informed the inn keeper.

Happy snickered, ‘Believe me, it’s not something you would want to see; all snot and tears. I’m bathed for a week afterwards.’

The older woman smiled kindly before reaching to take Emma’s cloth and drench it into the bowl of ice cold water in her lap. Once it was soaked she squeezed it to dry out the cloth, then placed it back onto the dragon’s forehead.

‘You two seem quite close,’ Sarah pointed out. ‘How long have you known each other?’

‘Since I hatched.’ Happy smiled as he patted Emma’s hand. ‘She taught me how to read and write. Emma’s the only parent I’ve ever known.’

The inn keeper sighed wistfully, ‘My son and I used to get on so well too.’ Sarah shook her head sadly and kept her eyes from meeting the exceed’s. ‘Ever since his father left…’

Happy frowned in concern as he tilted his head to the side. He briefly pursed his lips and turned to look back at his companion.

He hadn’t even known his biological family, as Emma referred to them. They had abandoned him simply because they didn’t want to raise him—the incredible, smart and funny creature that he was. Families didn’t do that to each other; weren’t supposed to at least.

His companion often talked about the way she had grown up, most likely because he didn’t understand the implications of most of the things she said and thus didn’t make a big deal out of it.

‘It’ll get better,’ Happy found himself admitting. ‘Both Emma and I were abandoned by our biological parents. Hers, at least, had a good reason. Mine just didn’t want to raise me anymore.’ The yellow feline shrugged his small shoulders, truly unaffected by their error in judgement. ‘He’s just scared and confused right now. Being a teenager only intensifies those feelings.’

‘I hope that’s all it is,’ sighed Sarah, pain etched onto her face. ‘I just wish that I’d open the door and there he would be; back to his old self, holding a pet and begging me to keep it.’

The brunette reached forward to once again take the cloth off Emma’s forehead. However, this time, Emma snatched onto her wrist, her eyes flying open wide and then transforming into slits.

‘Emma—’

‘Shh,’ whispered Happy, then reassured the brunette. ‘She’s just hallucinating again. It’ll pass.’

Emma took long and heavy breaths as she stared at Sarah, eyes welling up with tears. Her grip tightened on the older woman’s wrist, but not until the point where it became painful. Then, after a few moments past, she spoke.

‘Regina,’ her voice cracked with emotion and grogginess of the fever. ‘I’m… I’m sorry.’ She took long ragged breaths that hitched every time she tried to hold back her sobs. ‘I… I didn’t mean to… I… I wish it wasn’t my fault. I don’t want you sad. I want you to be happy.’ With a quivering, Emma tilted her head to the side and allowed her tears to spill from her eyes. ‘I want to come home… Please, let me come home.’
Happy could feel his small, feline heart shatter then and there. Emma often spoke in her sleep and it was always among these lines. Usually he would just slip into her bedroll with her and rub soothing circles on her back, but now she was solely focused on Sarah. Even if Happy tried to pry her attention away he knew that he’d fail miserably.

Biting the inside of his cheek, he stared cautiously between his friend and the uncertain woman. Poor Sarah’s eyes were wide and filled with shock. Happy could clearly see the inner struggle in her being as she tried to decide how delicate the situation truly was and what she should do.

‘Oh, Emma,’ she whispered, careful not to alarm the sick woman. ‘Of course you can come home.’

The dragon seemed to relax at that, a smile illuminating through her sorrows.

‘I do think you should rest now,’ informed Sarah, slowly removing Emma’s hand so that she could hold onto it. ‘Everything will be alright.’

Nodding, Emma slowly began to close her eyes. ‘Yeah,’ she agreed. ‘Sleep’s good.’ The dragon drifted off into a deep slumber and her hand went limp in Sarah’s hold. Her breathing evening out.

‘Thank you,’ whispered Happy, careful to keep his voice low. ‘That meant a lot to her. I could tell.’

Sarah nodded with a sad smile. ‘I just wish I could do more to help her. She seemed so heartbroken.’

The exceed sighed, ‘She is.’
Okay, either you guys know your Disney movies, or I left too many clues to google Treasure Planet. :D

Nevertheless, I’m keeping my word and blessing you guys with an extra chapter.

‘We know she’s somewhere in the North Woods. We split up into groups, comb every part of it until we find any sign of her. Stay on your radios and the minute someone finds her, you radio Happy and I. We’ll handle this.’

‘You and the bobblehead go after her alone? Miss Swan, are you clinically insane or did you hit your head and somehow we’re all unaware of the trauma your brain has suffered. You and I barely made it out alive last time we went up against her, or are you suffering from amnesia as well?’

‘I know Eris—She’s not going to harm me, you guys on the other hand—’

‘Yeah, but you made her swear—gave you her word—that as long as you didn’t help save Marian, then she wouldn’t harm your family or the townspeople.’

‘Kid, she would have found a loophole by now, trust me. That was just to keep her occupied for a while whilst we got our ducks in a row.’

‘Miss Swan, we don’t have our ducks in a row.’ Rumple scoffed with a roll of his eyes. ‘Think about this. Thoroughly. Eris is the goddess of Chaos and Discord, meaning that getting us to turn against one another will be a walk in the park. Not to mention, not even I am powerful enough to face her, and I am the Dark One, dearie.’

‘Yeah, well, Emma’s more powerful than you.’

‘Oh, really now, cat. What makes you think that?’

This has been a game of one-step-forward-two-steps-back for the past hour. Emma thinks it’s rather pathetic. She was supposed to be their leader and yet, every decision she’d made in the time span has been questioned or, apparently, shut down.

The savior was insulted to say the least. She’d trained with Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, for at least six months. Now, she was in fact a miracle worker and Emma was proud to say that she had picked up a few things from the Battle Strategist. It was a safe assumption to say that Emma knew exactly what she was doing.

A headache began to form due to listening to everyone’s squabbling. No one could agree on a plan, even though it was most of them who had insisted that they meet in the morning after Emma, Happy and Regina’s encounter with the goddess.

Mary Margaret and David were worried about Emma’s safety, Happy and Gold were arguing who between the latter and Emma was the most powerful, Regina didn’t want Emma to face Eris alone, August and Hook looked equally lost in the conversation and Belle and Elsa were standing idly, eyes
bigger than a deer’s caught in headlights.

It was stupid, really. This is what Eris wanted. She wanted them to fight; turn against one another, against Emma. Whilst it was still rather unclear what the entirety of Eris’s plan was, Emma knew that it would somehow end with her in the goddess’s bed, at least, that was the end goal. It relied entirely on this arguing team inside the Sheriff station and, right now, they were pretty much screwed.

The fire that stoked in Emma’s belly, continuously burning, ever present within her, didn’t like the idea of repeating her pattern of depression that had only just ended after the last few months. So, naturally, it gave its opinion on the matter.

‘Enough,’ bellowed Emma, slamming her palm down onto the town map that was spread out in front of her.

Everyone seemed to jump back in fright, even Regina and Gold. Happy was the only exception, not even flinching due to being accustomed to the dragon within his best friend.

‘This is my battle and if any of you want to help me, it’ll be on my terms. This is not a democracy. I’ve seen Eris level cities, entire kingdoms to get what she wants from me. She will not hesitate to wipe any of you from existence. Gods and goddesses may not kill mortals, but she sure as hell will send any of her magical creatures to tear you all to shreds.’

Emma took a deep breath when she was finally met with silence. Most of the occupants in the room were staring at her with enormously wide eyes, fear and shock echoing through them. Other’s’ were filled with pity and understanding. This helped her begin anew now that there was no one yelling in her ear, sending her into sensory overload.

‘Look, I can’t tell you what I’m planning, for all we know Eris could be listening in right now, but I do have a plan. One that won’t get anyone killed. I won’t let anyone die because I was weak and thought that I was alone. Now, if you’re not with me, I suggest you go home, where you’ll stay out of my way and, more importantly, Eris’s way.’

Silence echoed through the station, some faces portrayed shame and guilt at having doubted the dragon, others seemed to be resigned to the conditions, albeit unhappy with them.

Emma didn’t care what anyone thought at that moment. All she wanted was Eris gone so that she could continue living her life here in Storybrooke and forget the goddess had ever existed.

David, bless his soul, was the first to speak up. There were times when Emma had questioned her father’s intelligence much like Regina, but in that moment she knew that the Prince Charming knew her better than he led on, practically a few steps ahead of the others in suspecting what she wanted next.

‘Hook, Regina, Emma, Happy, you take the west,’ David pointed down at the map, directing them towards the area he thought best. ‘Gold, August you’re with me for the east.’

‘I think we all know I work best alone.’

‘There’s no time, nor could I even begin to argue with that,’ David turned to Belle. ‘Belle, how’s your tracking?’

‘Uh, actually, I think I’ll be more helpful at the library. Maybe I can dig something up on Eris.’

Emma and Happy shared a look at the odd way Belle’s tone pitched. They shared a silent conversation prompting the small feline to nod his head.
'I think that Elsa and I should join her then,' informed Happy. ‘Maybe we can find something out about Anna while we're there.’

‘That’s a wonderful idea,’ agreed Elsa, smile practically lighting up the room.

The queen turned towards Belle, the woman now seemingly having adopted a wide-eyed look of shock.

‘You wouldn’t mind the company, would you, Belle?’ Elsa questioned hopefully.

The librarian glanced between the two magic users, unable to find her words it seemed. Emma watched the redhead closely, her lips pulling into a thin line.

Finally, Belle managed to shake her head, giving a weak smile.

Perhaps her behavior had everyone else fooled, but Emma and Happy had both spent too much time around people who tried to lie and deceive to get themselves out of trouble. They could both spot someone telling a lie miles away.

‘No, not at all. I’d love some.’

Elsa’s smile seemed to somehow brighten as she walked off towards the exit. Belle seemed to hesitate before following after her. Happy and Emma shared another look, the latter tapping her nose twice. The feline did the same before he sprouted wings and took off after the two women.

* 

Happy didn’t need Emma’s superpower to be able to tell when someone was lying. Belle was a poor liar to begin with given her soft and innocent heart. The librarian had been sheltered for most her life with nothing but stories to tell her what the real world was like. Emma had made it quite clear that he was to keep an eye on the redhead even before she ordered him to go with Belle and Elsa today.

It didn’t sit right with the feline, leaving Emma alone on today of all days. He didn’t exactly trust her to be able to control herself to face Eris when the time came. However, since she and Regina made up, he needed to have faith that her feelings for the sorceress was stronger than they were for the goddess. He needed to trust that Regina would be able to talk some sense into her.

The feline walked unsteadily towards the desk in the small office. In his arms he held several books that he and Belle had procured from Regina’s library in her vault. There was still hundreds that they needed to sort through, but the few dozen they had on hand would be enough.

Happy suddenly tripped over a loose tile, having been unable to see where he was going. The books scattered across the floor, a loud Oomph escaping him.

‘Oops.’

‘Oh, Happy, are you alright?’ Elsa stepped away from the bookcase that she had been seen through, helping the feline to his feet. ‘Here let me help you with these.’

Together they began to re-stack all of the books, setting them down into the desk.

‘Thank you,’ sighed Happy, a frown making its way onto his forehead. ‘I get my clumsiness from Emma, it seems.’

Elsa giggled softly, ‘So it would seem.’ The queen considered the feline’s defeated look as she
watched him fly up and land on the desk. ‘You didn’t hurt yourself now, did you?’

Happy shook his head, ‘No, ma’am.’

The feline plopped himself down, not meeting her eyes as he grabbed the book closest to him. He opened it on the first page, not even aware that it was upside down.

‘I’m fine,’ he insisted.

‘Are you certain?’

Another nod.

‘You seem a little distracted, perhaps conflicted even.’

‘Why do you say that?’ Happy looks up towards Elsa, his frown deepening.

Elsa smiled softly at the feline, grasping onto his book and turning it right-around. The exceed dropped his head before shutting the book and setting it aside.

‘I’m just worried about Emma,’ explained Happy, looking up into Elsa’s pure blue eyes. ‘I’m worried she’ll make the same mistake and I’ll be powerless to stop her. Like I always am.’

‘Well, you’re not alone this time,’ reassured Elsa, placing a reassuring hand on his foot. ‘We don’t want Emma to land in Eris’s clutches anymore than you do.’

‘What happens if it isn’t enough? What happens if she still falls apart at Eris’s feet?’

‘Then we’ll be there to pick up the pieces, together.’

Happy stared at Elsa, considering her words and her soft eyes that made him think the world wasn’t such a bad place after all, even with the gods in them.

On an impulse, the exceed flew into the air before wrapping his tiny arms around Elsa’s neck as best he could. The sorceress hesitated for a moment before she awkwardly returned the embrace.

When they pulled apart, the queen and the exceed spared one another one last smile before Elsa turned to walk back towards the shelf that she had been inspecting.

Happy’s eyes sought out Belle’s form, finding the woman inspecting a map of Storybrooke on the end of the office opposite to Elsa. He raised a curious eyebrow at her, wondering what was going through her mind.

‘Whatcha got there, Belle?’

The redhead quickly shoved the map back into the file box and turned around so quickly that Happy feared she might get whiplashed. The feline found at her odd behavior.

‘Nothing,’ squeaked Belle, face pale at having been caught.

A lie. Plain and clear as the daylight outside.

‘...’ Happy pulled his lips into a thin line but chose to let it go for now. ‘Okay.’
Belle’s up to something, Emma. What do you want me to do?

Keep an eye on her, little buddy. Don’t let her out of your sight. If she tries to leave, make sure she takes you with her. Tell her that you trust her and get her to trust you. I’ve got a feeling she’s going to do something stupid. If and when that does happen, call out to me.

Aye, sir.

An ice cream truck.

The Merry Men called in because they found an ice cream truck. It was a clue left by Eris, that part was clear. Suddenly, Emma found herself not so much annoyed by Robin’s presence anymore. Despite what she thought of him, he had the town’s best interest at heart and he was a good man despite his lesser fine qualities.

The significance of the ice cream truck, why Emma hadn’t overlooked it, was because she had introduced Eris to the treat on their first... date, if you will.

Their relationship was most of time all about the physical part, but there were times when Emma felt like she had to do something special for the goddess. She wasn’t an idiot and knew that immortal beings’ attention continuously wandered.

Back then Emma had done everything in her power to keep that attention on her. Now, she wished she hadn’t and instead listened to the voice of reason that banged a gong yelling ‘Don’t do it you son of a—’

‘David,’ Emma spoke into the radio. ‘We found something. Probably a clue that Eris left for me.’

Around Emma, Regina, Hook and the Merry Men were advancing on the truck ahead of them, everyone cautious and preparing to take action if she gave the word. The blonde had explained the significance of the odd clue to Regina and Hook, both not exactly thrilled at hearing any details of her and Eris’s relationship. Emma chalked Hook’s behavior off for being slightly jealous, given his feelings towards her, but she had no idea why Regina seemed annoyed.

The radio crackled to life in Emma’s hand, causing her to nearly leap out of her skin at the unexpected sound echoing around in her head.

‘What did you find?’

‘An ice cream truck.’ She paused. ‘And yes, I am aware how odd it sounds. I’ll explain later if we don’t get ourselves killed.’

‘That’s not funny, Emma.’

Emma smirked at her father’s tone, but didn’t comment on it. She might be a cocky bastard, but she knew that anything she said to David somehow wound up back to her mother. Emma was a dragon, but Snow White’s wrath was not something to be taken lightly.

Turning towards Robin, eyeing his crossbow before she offered a toothy grin, ‘Thanks for keeping an eye out for anything suspicious.’

‘Gladly,’ smiled the dark haired man. ‘You’re the first sheriff I don’t mind assisting.’ Robin walked close to the dragon’s side a curious look taking over his features. ‘If you don’t mind me asking, what’s the significance of the ice cream truck?’
‘I fucked Eris in one.’

Robin was so floored by the statement that he completely stopped in his tracks, allowing Emma and Hook to pass him by. The man, however, recovered when his eyes landed on Regina. Robin allowed Emma’s bizarre statement to slip his mind for the time being as he focused all his attention on the brunette.

‘Uh, Regina, I was hoping we could talk.’

‘In case you haven't noticed, I'm about to storm an evil ice-cream truck.’

Regina stepped away from Robin Hood, walking up right next to Emma.

‘You could have just said, "Maybe later."’

‘I could also set you on fire, but we both know you’d rather enjoy that.’

Emma wanted to laugh, she truly did, but given how her mood was rapidly increasing towards the set-everything-on-fire-and-eat-people side she found that she wasn’t capable of laughing at Regina’s usual sass.

The trio, three amigos, magic crime fighting buddies, whatever Emma called the odd combination of herself, Regina and Hook, stepped up right behind the back of the poorly concealed vehicle. Eris wanted them to find this clue for some odd reason, and that filled Emma with worry. By now, Eris was bound to have found some sort of loophole in their deal and the savior didn’t trust that no-one would get hurt today.

So, when Regina reached to open the double doors, Emma was quick to grasp her wrist. The sorceress turned to frown at her friend.

‘Wha—’

‘I’ll open it,’ informed the savior through a set jaw. ‘Just in case.’

Killian seemed hesitant, not sure if he should step in between the two women, offering his protection of them both. ‘Are you certain, Swan?’

Emma sent the pirate a reassuring smile, ‘Yeah.’

In a swift movement, Emma yanked open both doors and took a step up into the truck. She didn’t see the ice shards coming until they were imbedded into her stomach and abdomen.

* 

‘This is pointless.’

‘Life?’

‘No, Happy. Looking through all of these books. I don’t know why I thought I’d find anything about Anna in here.’

‘You know she’s somewhere. You heard her heartbeat with Bo Peep’s staff.’

Elsa remained silent, her lips pulling into a thin line. The feline considered the queen, thinking how Emma too was someone who brushed off any reassurances like they held not a smidgen of truth. It was upsetting to see Elsa devoid of any hope that she would find her sister and that she would never
see her ever again.

‘Happy’s right,’ added Belle. ‘You mustn’t give up. We’re going to find Anna.’

‘But my memories are gone. And no one in this town has even been to Arendelle.’

‘That’s not true, Emma and I went to Arendelle.’

Elsa and Belle turned towards the feline, raising their eyebrows in surprise. Happy glanced in between them, slightly confused as to why they were staring at him like that.

‘You—Why didn’t you say anything before?’

Happy shrugged his shoulders, ‘I didn’t think it mattered. It was a good few hundred years before Regina had cast the Dark Curse, so we might not even know anything of value.’

It had been a rather simple quest; retrieval of the magical Harp of Troy. Aphrodite had been adamant in wanting a reminder of her favorite power couple in History. Emma had been quite certain that she was talking about Paris and Helen of Troy. The dragon had attempted in explaining it to Happy, but he was too invested in the fish his pseudo parent had caught for them that afternoon.

‘We could ask Emma. She keeps a coded journal of all the places we’d been to so we can keep track of the timeline and not mess with things we’re not supposed to.’

‘Perhaps she might have something in her journal—a way that could help me find Anna?’

Happy shrugged his shoulders, ‘Maybe, but I wouldn’t get your hopes up. It was a long time before Regina and everyone else from the Enchanted Forest was even born.’

‘In the meantime, keep looking,’ ordered Belle, rising to her feet.

‘What?’ Elsa frowned in confusion. ‘Where are you going?’

‘There’s something I need to take care of,’ explained Belle, eyes darting nervously around on the table as she grabbed several books off the table. ‘I won’t be long, I promise.’

Happy and Elsa watched the librarian saunter out of the office and soon after heard the entrance door slam shut once more. The feline turned towards Elsa, finding the same look on her face as he would have on Emma’s—calculating wether or not to go after Belle.

‘We’re going after her?’

‘Thank goodness, I wouldn’t have been able to suggest it on my own.’

‘Good, cause Emma wouldn’t be happy with me if I let her out of my sight.’

**Enchanted Forest—Past**

She had trudged through the forest for what had felt like for hours. Night had already settled in and the campfire was long out of eyesight.

Hephaestus had been adamant that he had wanted to speak to her alone after she retrieved his hammer and she wasn’t about to let him down. Emma had read her fair share of greek tales to know that there were consequences if the hero disobeyed their conditions. She was never one for authority, but an immortal god was the last thing in the universe whose temper she wanted to test.
The woman shivered involuntarily, and tried to ignore the breath she released into the cold knight air. Her red leather jacket was barely even doing anything to keep the breeze that zigzagged through the trees away from her pale skin.

In her pocket, the hammer began to shake and pulled her into different directions. Emma reached in and tried to free the object from its confinement, yet as soon as it did it flew from her grasp. When the savior looked up, she took note of the god whose presence she now stood in. Before her very eyes the hammer began to grow in size until it finally matched what Emma supposed as its full size.

Like always, his onyx eyes watched her kindly. Emma presumed that he was quite likely the only god like this. Other gods’ tales didn’t exactly scream rainbows and butterflies.

‘I have to be honest, my dear,’ chuckled Hephaestus, swinging his hammer so that it rested on his broad shoulder. He walked forward, his lame visible in the way he moved. ‘I hadn’t expected you to survive that treacherous maze.’

The blonde crossed her arms over her chest and gave the god a deadpanned expression, ‘Gee, thanks for the confidence you’ve placed in me.’

Smiling, the god reached up to stroke his beard thoughtfully, ‘You’ve proven yourself to be full of surprises, Miss Swan.’

‘You have no idea.’

‘And I must say that your blatant disrespect is a breath of fresh air.’ Hephaestus paused briefly and glanced off as though lost in a memory. Then, he informed, ‘Most gods and goddesses would have had your head on a silver platter by now.’

Emma was quick to counter, ‘I thought you immortals didn’t kill our kind?’

‘No, they don’t,’ agreed the ancient being before he leaned forward with a warning look, ‘but they do have ways of finding loopholes in that which Zeus had set in stone.’ The god rested his free hand on his belly before continuing, ‘When in the presence of other gods, I’d advise you to hold your tongue. Even if you are my champion, my dear.’

Unable to help herself, a smile spread out slightly over Emma’s lips. She rose a mischievous eyebrow and tilted her head to the side, ‘So, I got the job, huh?’

The corners of Hephaestus’s mouth quirked upwards, his thick mustache bouncing in unison, ‘Yes, I suppose that you’ve earned the title despite my better judgement.’

Casually, Emma tried to downplay her excitement by placing her hands into her pockets and shrug her shoulders. ‘So, uh, how does this work exactly?’

‘I’m going to give you a gift.’

Hephaestus approached Emma with some difficulty, making his way directly in front of her. He reached forward and lightly touched her forehead where a noticeable spark of flames traveled into the skin there.

Emma closed her eyes and allowed the heat to flow through her entire being, visible through the small areas of light that appeared underneath her skin overall.

‘It’s a rare ability; ancient magic taught only to those who are of the worthiest of wielders.’ He pulled back, glancing deeply into Emma’s green orbs with a soft expression that she couldn’t quite
decipher. ‘You must train hard to be able to control it one day for this magic requires a large quantity of energy.’

Emma frowned slight, ‘Are you going to tell me what it is?’

The god smiled in a way that told Emma that he most certainly was not. He took a step back before he lowered his hammer to the ground so that he could lean all of his weight onto it.

‘Tomorrow, I will teach you a spell; allowing you to travel through time by the gods’ will.’ Hephaestus pursed his lips, seemingly considering his supposed options. ‘However, for now you must return to your friends. Eat, drink and feast together at the table I give to you as a gift. Say your goodbyes, for tomorrow you and that exceed egg of yours need to start your first quest.’

The savior frowned slightly before she turned away. She took a few steps before she turned back around, wanting to say something, anything that was currently weighing on her heart. However, she found herself only staring at the forest that surrounded her. Just as quickly as he had come, the god had disappeared into thin air.
Chapter Notes

So, I botched my driver’s test today. I want to throw myself off a bridge, but instead I’m posting a chapter.

It was starting to become hard to distinguish if Eris actually wanted Emma’s child or if she wanted her dead, because it was becoming increasingly difficult to chalk all of her injuries off as accidents. Especially when Regina’s personal doctor, Paige Young, was currently binding her torso, much to Emma’s annoyance. The tick mark on the blonde’s forehead was quite obvious from where she stood and Regina hoped that Emma’s temper wouldn’t flare. The last thing she needed was the savior lashing out at Dr. Young.

Regina was barely paying attention to whatever Robin was saying, staring over his shoulder at Emma. The bandages were most likely the majority of what was causing the scowl on the dragon’s face, the material soaked in blood and would needed to be changed within the hour. The sorceress was much more concerned that Emma could have internal damage than she was interested in Robin’s inquiries on why she was avoiding him.

The sound of those ice spikes flying through the air, piercing through flesh, was still echoing in Regina’s ears. When Emma had dropped down onto the floor, eyes wide with shock and disbelief, the brunette’s heart had suddenly stopped.

There was something regarding Regina’s feelings towards Emma that she couldn’t explain; the jealousy, the constant fear for her safety, the fact that the sorceress actually cared if Emma died.

Damn it all to the Underworld, she was in love with Emma Swan whilst in the same time she had complicated feelings towards Robin.

Could it even be possible?

There was Emma, and then there was Robin.

And yet, there was no competition.

Gun to her head? Regina would choose Emma every time over Robin. Not just because the blonde was the other mother of her child, but because somehow, somewhere along the line, Regina’s feelings of hate had twisted around entirely and became feelings of... love.

The sorceress wanted to be nauseous, in the very least be disgusted with herself that she had managed to fall not only for a woman, but probably the most unobtainable women on the planet.

Traitor.

That’s what Regina’s heart was. A stone cold, backstabbing traitor.

It was no secret of what Emma Swan’s preferences were when it came to a partner. It had been one of the reasons why she was such an enigma in town, practically the only one of her kind, next to Ruby Lucas of course. Storybrooke, despite being a small cursed town, didn’t have a single bigot
amongst its ranks.

Except for King George.

And Sidney.

Perhaps Rumple.

The garden topiaries that were alive, they were there too.

Other than that, the townspeople were open-minded and created a generally safe environment for most people. Mostly because it was never a problem in the Enchanted Forest. True love magic was capable of many things and was the reason why many people in same-sex marriages could sire children. The people who didn’t approve of it were mostly small in number, but not small with power.

She was way off track, thinking of Emma in that way when was supposed to be focusing on Robin in front of her. Regina should be discussing with Robin how it was utterly hopeless in saving Marian. However, the sorceress was never good in being told what she should be doing. So, instead Regina kept staring over his shoulder at the injured dragon.

‘—asked you to find a way to save my wife.’

Regina sharply turned to look into Robin’s blue orbs, brought back to reality by those words. She realized that Robin was staring at her expectantly, as though he was waiting for her to say something. Ever the queen she was, it was unwise to allow the man the knowledge of her distracted self. For a moment Regina wracked her mind for a response and went purely on what she deduced from their conversation.

‘That’s not why I’m avoiding you.’

‘Then, why can’t you even look me in the eye?’

Whilst her words had been what he expected, the very least, Regina was so not interested in having this conversation. If it were at all an option, Regina would kill herself rather than have this conversation.

‘Robin, I’m not doing this with you right now,’ informed Regina, pursing her lips.

The sorceress turned her gaze back to Emma, who was looking at her as well. Their eyes met, and something earth shattering happen. The dragon’s scowl fell away and morphed into a smile. It was the same one that Emma had given her before The Incident; warm, caring and filled with something that Regina had yet to decipher. However, it was somehow goofier, if that was even at all possible.

Regina offered a brief one in returned before she turned back to Robin, a frown hiding the affection away, ‘If it’s gone completely over your head, Miss—er—Emma had just been injured. We need to regroup. Eris, the reason why we’re here, must be close if we’d just stumbled into one of her traps. We don’t have time for this.’

Starting to leave, Regina walked past Robin and made her way towards Emma. That was until the thief decided it was a brilliant idea to grasp onto her wrist, hindering her from just continuing on her path.

‘Regina, please. We need to talk.’
`Robin,’ Regina’s voice was calm, perhaps even cold. ‘Let go of my wrist. Now.’

Soulmate or not. Regina did not like being grabbed.

‘No, I—’

The presence that was suddenly next to them radiated with sheer power. They both turned to find Emma now gripping onto Robin, prying his hands from Regina’s wrist. For some reason, the sorceress swallowed nervously alongside the thief, feeling the raw energy that vibrated through Emma’s entire body.

She knew of this tactic well. She’d seen Maleficent use it a hundred times over, marking her territory as a dragon. Regina didn’t know how she felt about Emma warding off Robin, marking the brunette as her own, but she wasn’t furious like she was supposed to be. Not even a little bit.

‘I respect you, Robbie. I do, really,’ informed Emma, shrugging her shoulders slightly. ‘Though, if Regina asks you to let go, then you let go.’

Robin stood there speechless, opening and closing his mouth before clenching his jaw. The thief yanked away from Emma’s painful grip, only able to break free because the blonde allowed it. Not wasting any time he stalked away from the two women, walking off towards his Merry Men.

Emma turned towards Regina and her eyes shifted from slits back into their regular form. Somehow they even softened. The dragon placed his hands on her hips, boasting her breasts forward in the sports bra she wore, seemingly shameless of her state of undress.

‘You okay?’ Such a simple question, but it held the weight of a world.

Regina smiled tightly, nodding her head. ‘Yes. I suppose gratitude is in order?’

The dragon shook her head, offering a toothy grin, ‘No, ma’am. It’s my job as savior to help people out of socially awkward situations, right? Or have I mixed it up somehow?’

‘No, I think you’re spot on,’ snarked Regina, rolling her eyes playfully.

Their playful banter was interrupted when Emma sharply turned around, staring off into a seemingly random direction. Regina stepped beside her, watching as Emma’s ears transformed into that of a dragon’s, sharp, pointy and leather skinned. The sorceress glanced deep into the tree line in an attempt to see what the dragon had picked up on.

‘What's wrong?’

‘Something’s heading this way.’

* 

Happy regretted thinking that he, Elsa and Belle would be able to handle whatever awaited for them in Eris’s secret lair, which Belle had apparently known the location of for gods know how long. At first, it was a good idea to just keep an eye on the librarian from a safe distance with Elsa. Then there was the moment Belle disappeared into the large icy cave, when they followed, not only was she distracted by the large mirror in front of her, but she was also completely oblivious snow creatures that had begun to crawl down the sides of the walls. Or better yet, the snow demons.

Emma made it pretty clear that she wanted to be notified if Belle did something stupid. The fact that there were small demons chasing them through the woods as Happy clutched onto Belle and Elsa’s
sides as he flew with Max Speed, barely dodging the trees as the demons fired different kinds of attacks at them.

They were in so much trouble.

In no way was Happy helpless, he did know how to defend himself, but Eris’s creatures were... well, they were much more manageable if Emma handled them. Not to mention, he now had to keep the two women in his grasp safe.

‘Emma’s gonna be so maaaad,’ Happy drawled, narrowly avoiding another blast at the same time he dodged a pine tree. Behind them the monstrosity crashed down onto the forest floor.

Belle and Elsa glanced back with wide frightened eyes, noticing the dozens of smaller creatures still coming after them as though they were water flowing in a river. The combined noises that they created together sounded like thousands of scurrying rats. Simultaneously, the women’s eyes widened as they turned to look at one another, sharing a brief silent conversation before they looking up at Happy.

‘Less talking, more flying!’

‘I mean, what were you thinking, Belle? Going off like that on your own,’ Happy shook his head, barely avoiding another blast of magical energy. ‘Now Elsa and I are gonna get in trouble as well for not calling Emma as soon as things went south because you don’t want people to know that you went sneaking around in Eris’s cave for whatever reason.’

‘Happy—’

‘Don’t you think that it’s time to come clean? I mean we’re in quite a pickle here. I’ve seen those things eat a person whole—’

‘Happy—’

‘And let me tell you, it’s not a pretty sight.’

‘Happy—’

‘I mean, they like just open their mouths and then the next moment they—’

This time Elsa was the one to cry out in fear, ‘Happy, watch out!’

Much to late Happy noticed the fireball making a beeline right for them. The exceed’s eyes widened as it collided with his backside, singeing his wings and sending them all crashing onto the cold, hard ground. Belle and Elsa rolled several feet behind the small feline, the wind completely knocked out of them.

Happy shook his head in an attempt to rid himself of his dizziness and no doubt the concussion that he now had. The exceed’s wings disappeared in a pop of sparkling magical energy. Happy forced himself on his feet only to come face to face with the small army of deformed creatures. Behind him he could sense Belle and Elsa trying to get to their feet in an attempt to help the feline fight off the demons.

For the first time since they’d taken off out of Eris’s lair, Happy got a better look at what they up against. It wasn’t like he hadn’t seen them before, like he had told the two women, he and Emma had squared off against the monstrosities before.
They were the color of the night sky with thousands of small stars covering their bodies, the size of about two Happy’s stacked up on one another. Most of them had deformed bodies, an extra arm or three, an extra leg or eye. Some had horns whilst others had tails, and other had sharp canine-like teeth.

Happy clenched his jaw, taking in a fighting stance. He had promised Emma that he would keep Belle and Elsa safe. That meant he would gladly die to fulfill that promise, even if Emma was going to be anything but happy with him if that was the outcome of this mess.

A demonic cry escaped the small beasts’ mouths as they prepared to attack, the sound sending shivers down each of the trio’s spines.

This was it. This was how Happy’s short life came to an end.

He should have eaten more fish.

Just as the demons was about to storm, a wall of pure fire separated them from Happy, Belle and Elsa. Happy closed his eyes in relief before he scrambled back towards the other two women, noticing Regina already helping them to their feet and in the direction furthest away from the battlefield.

Happy didn’t know whether to kiss the sorceress or hug her.

‘Come on, cat,’ ordered Regina. ‘Unless you want to get roasted as well.’

The feline turned back to where Emma was now squaring off against the demons. She glanced back at her companion, her frown morphing into a smirk. Fire began to surround her from the ground up her fists clenched as she braced herself, allowing the magical energy to continue building.

‘Coming, little buddy?’

‘Aye, sir!’

*

‘Did you see the—’

‘Yeah! And the way they—’

‘Oh, oh! The best part was when they—’

Emma and Happy exploded into another fit of uncontainable laughter, their faces lighting up as they basked in the afterglow of their victory. It was interrupted when Regina gave a sharp pinch to Emma’s side. The blonde yelped in discomfort, glaring at the woman who was tending to the bandages wrapped around her torso.

Whilst the demons were defeated, Emma briefly forgotten about her injuries. The material that meant to keep her from damaging her stitches was practically soaked in blood. The desk over from the trio, Belle and Elsa were having their own bumps and bruises examined by Dr. Young.

‘Ow, what was that for?’ Emma whined petulantly, a pout forming on her lips.

‘Sit still,’ ordered Regina, giving her a stern look. ‘If it’s escaped your notice, I was currently occupied examining on your injuries.’

Emma rolled her eyes, ‘There’s probably nothing to check. It doesn’t hurt anymore, so it’s healed.’
‘You also said it didn’t hurt when that giant tore off your wing.’

‘What?!’

‘It grew back!’

The sorceress briefly closed her eyes before she simply continued on in removing the bandages. It was easier to ignore it than it was for them to talk about anything that had happened in the past three years. Regina supposed that it would always be like that, never to return to where they had once been in their mutual understanding of one another.

By the time Emma’s torso was exposed, any trace of stitches or wounds was gone except for three distinctive circular scars that now decorated Emma’s skin. Without thinking, Regina ran her fingers over them, causing the savior to shudder in enjoyment.

‘See?’ Emma’s voice broke through the tension. ‘Good as new,’ reassured the savior, offering a toothy grin. ‘No need to worry about me.’

‘Mmm,’ hummed Regina, narrowing her eyes at the blonde. ‘I fear that you might send your mother and I into an early grave.’

‘Wouldn’t it be a belated grave?’

‘Thin ice, cat. Thin. Ice.’

Emma grabbed onto the tank top laying next to her on the wooden furniture before throwing it over her head, much to Regina’s disappointment, and turned to face the other three women. Dr. Young was tending to the last of their cuts and bruises, applying butterfly plasters to the wounds that needed it the most.

Dr. Paige Young had been Regina’s midwife back in the enchanted forest—a young woman around the same age as Regina herself; hair darker than the night and eyes the color of comets—relieved of her position after the third time that Regina miscarried the King’s child. When Regina had cast the curse, she’d given Paige a good life; a life that could be considered a happy ending. It was payment for the kindness the medicine woman had shown towards her when she’d taken care of Regina all those years ago. One could say that she was Regina’s only friend back then.

Paige turned towards Regina, smiling softly at the queen, ‘Most of their injuries are superficial. Nothing serious, but I suggest that they are monitored for signs of concussions. They’d both taken a nasty fall when they’d tumbled onto the forest floor.’

‘Aye, sir,’ nodded Happy. ‘Thanks, Dr. Lady.’

‘Paige is just fine, sweetie,’ chuckled the blue eyed beauty. Turning back to Regina, she continued, ‘Feel free to call me if you ever needed my help for anything else.’

‘Thank you, Paige,’ nodded Regina. ‘You’re much too kind.’

‘Not at all, Regina,’ reassured Paige. With a wave of her hand the woman disappeared in a cloud of light blue smoke.

Paige was a skilled sorceress as well; one of the many reasons why she was relieved from the palace’s employment.

‘I didn’t know you had your own personal doctor. I didn’t even know Storybrooke had more than
one doctor.’

‘Well, dear, do you see me running to Whale with Henry? He’d do more harm than good, incompetent little imp.’

‘Fair enough—’ Emma glanced towards Happy, the feline still standing on the desk that Emma had been perched on a moment earlier. ‘Okay, little buddy. I need you to sit with Belle and Elsa for a moment. All three of you are still in trouble and you aren’t getting off the hook any time soon.’

Happy blew out a breath but complied by flying over to the other two women, who looked just as guilty as the feline did.

Emma and Regina mirrored one another’s stances, staring pointedly at the guilty party before them.

‘What in the ever loving hell were you three imbeciles thinking? It is my understanding that Emma instructed you—Happy—to contact her the moment that something happened. Something being, Belle nearly getting the three of you killed.’

‘I have something to confess—’

‘Clearly.’

‘Regina,’ chided Emma.

Belle turned to look at Elsa, eyes welling up with tears, ‘I’ve been keeping a secret from you Elsa—from all of you—I know Anna. She helped me once, a long time ago. But when I had the chance to help her, I let her down. And because of what I did, she was captured by Eris.’

‘What?’ Elsa’s eyes were wide filled with shock and fear.

To Regina’s surprise it didn’t seem as if Elsa was even mad at the redhead, even if a little upset by what she had just learned.

‘Where did this happen?’

‘Arendelle, and I have no idea where she is now,’ Belle swallowed thickly, her attention turning to Happy. The feline crossed his arms over his chest, pulling his lips into a thin line. ‘But I’m afraid we have a more pressing matter. Eris’s magical mirror, she has it here in Storybrooke.’

Emma’s eyes hardened as she clenched her jaw. She placed her hands on her hips, drifting off into thought as she stared off to no particular fixed point.

‘A mirror?’ parroted Regina. ‘Then, I suggest we smash it.’

Emma shook her head fervently, meeting everyone’s worried gazes. ‘Not possible. It’s part of a spell; A powerful spell. It’s called The Spell of Shattered Sight. If she casts it, like she has before, its magic will make everyone in Storybrooke turn on one another.’

‘The entire town will tear each other apart,’ added Happy, his face taking a dark turn as he stared glumly up at his companion. ‘And there’d be no one left.’

‘Except Eris and I,’ sighed Emma, dragging a tired hand over her face. ‘Unless, I give her what she wants; me.’

Regina scowled menacingly, attempting to set the room around her ablaze with the power of her mind instead of her magic.
Over that pompous bitch’s cold dead corpse.

**Storybrooke—Past**

‘This is stupid!’

Emma jumped forward, just barely catching the violin that Henry tossed towards the bedroom floor. Her eyes were wide and filled with shock. It seemed as though the boy had unfortunate inherited her temper, and he barely even stood a chance to turn out normal thanks to his other mother. Neither of them were truly all there.

‘Watch it!’ Emma hissed furiously, rising from the ground and turning to face her son standing behind the music stand. ‘Do you know what this thing cost me? Two broken ribs—’

‘And a fractured hip,’ chorused Henry, glancing down in shame. ‘Sorry, Ma. It won’t happen again.’

‘You’re damn right it won’t,’ huffed the blonde, stepping closer to the brunet. ‘Not a lot of people have the privilege to have an instrument let alone play one. So, you better show some damn respect. I’ve never hit a kid before, but I sure won’t think twice about tanning your hide if you don’t get that through your skull.’

‘Sorry,’ Henry muttered again, still refusing to meet her eyes. ‘I lost my cool. I’ll respect my instrument.’

Satisfied, Emma nodded her head.

She’d had a foster mother who taught her how to play the violin. She only knew a few songs, but they were good enough to help Henry get started before he had to go off for lessons. It was no secret that the kid was a born natural and before Emma knew it he had been moving on to advanced classes. When they had returned to Storybrooke and Henry had gotten his memories back he admitted that he had never even touched a violin before New York.

With the God given talent came the same meek shyness that made Henry... well, Henry. He refused to play in front of anyone except Emma, mostly because he believed that he wasn’t good at it. So, they hid the instrument underneath Emma’s bed and only ever played when David or Mary Margaret was out and he never brought the instrument over to the mansion.

Henry wasn’t truly frustrated at himself for being unable to play a song that he had mastered thousands of times before, but he was frustrated because of what would take place tomorrow. Tomorrow Emma and Ruby would leave for the Enchanted Forest.

Emma understood where the boy was coming from. He was angry at the situation, at Regina, at the world for seemingly tearing his family apart.

‘Look, kid, I know you’re angry and sad.’ The blonde reached over and gently placed the instrument back in her son’s hand. ‘And I get that you’re pissed at your mom—’

‘It’s her fault that you’re leaving!’ He growled, tears welling up in his eyes. ‘This is her fault!’

‘No,’ Emma shook her head firmly, giving the boy a stern look. ‘It’s mine. I screwed up and I made a mistake. I put your mom in a lot of pain.’

‘But—’

‘No, Henry,’ insisted the blonde. ‘You’re mom’s going through some stuff of her own. I put her
there and you need to stop blaming her. I’m just as much to blame, okay?’

The brunette seemed to hesitate as he stared into his mother’s green orbs. Then he nodded his understanding, tightening his grip on his instrument.

‘Good,’ nodded Emma as she stepped up behind Henry. ‘Now, making music is a lot more than just reading a few notes off a damn paper. You need to feel it in your bones,’ she grabbed Henry by the shoulders and squeezed. ‘In every nook and cranny of your body. If you’re angry, then channel that. If you’re sad, use that emotion to speak through your instrument. Music is about expression, about saying what you don’t know how to say.’

Henry huffed as he stared down at the sheet music, lifting the violin to his chin. ‘Where’d you learn that?’

‘I had this Russian chick as a foster mom once,’ answered Emma, softly massaging Henry’s shoulders. ‘Beat the hell out of my fingers with a ruler if I made a mistake, but she was nice and I really liked her. She taught me a few songs, and I picked them up pretty quickly. I stayed like two months ‘til my social worker transferred me.’

‘That sucks,’ sighed Henry, trying to turn his head to face his mother. ‘I—’

Emma smiled as she turned Henry’s head back to the stand. ‘C’mon, kid. We don’t have all day. Try again. This time let whatever you’re feeling flow through your body, into your hands and fingers and out into the violin.’

Henry nodded, then did as he was told.
Another Crack In The Glass

That moment when you drop a glass of milk is surreal. There’s nothing you can do but watch as the previously well crafted item falls to the tiled floor, colliding instantaneously and sending the shards scattering across the floor. The milk flows in different directions, even going as far as splashing against the sides of the cupboards or your legs. Hours of heating sand down to a liquid state all for nought and your wanting for the wasted calcium ever growing.

The idiom *Don’t Cry Over Spilled Milk* means that you shouldn’t spend your time worrying about things of the past that cannot be changed. It’s a classic English proverb that warns us not to worry about things that happened or things that cannot be undone.

For a while you stare in shock at the mess, perhaps you even cringed at the sound of the glass that breaks. Then, you bend down and begin to collect the scattered pieces, knowing that the item would never be restored but at least you could clean up the kitchen floor. Now you had one less glass in the cupboard and a few millimeters milk that had gone to waste on the floor.

After you’d finished cleaning—mopped, swept, etc—you put away the cleaning tools and carry on, a little sad your beverage was ruined, but the floor was clean and it appeared as though it never happened. Perhaps you even pour yourself another glass of milk, wanting to attempt the guilty pleasure again, this time expecting successful results.

Perhaps days later you find another shard you’d missed, maybe you even step into it with your bare feet and your reminded of the pain it had caused you then and the pain it was causing you now. You realize that you would make future mistakes like this once more. Glasses of spilled milk were inevitable.

*Storybrooke—Recent Past*

Between searching for a way to free Marian and a way to somehow defeat Eris, it left little time for Regina to simply take a seat and think about the gravity of her feelings. Things between her and Emma were finally up to the point where they could have a conversation, banter here and there, without thinking of the past all too much. Now, Regina had to complicate things with feeble things like attraction. Regina had feelings towards Robin, of course, but it seemed forced somehow just because he had the lion’s tattoo that Tinkerbelle said would lead her to her happy ending. The sorceress needed to have a conversation with that blubbering fae it seemed.

The sorceress stared at the book in her hands, obtaining nothing of any value. At least nothing that she didn’t know of this Eris goddess before. She knew that she was the one who ultimately caused the trojan war hundreds of years ago, daughter of Zeus and Hera, etcetera, etcetera. Eris had caused a lot of death and destruction in the past and it seemed like old habits died hard. Now it seemed her sights were set on Emma, hellbent on getting what she wanted no matter who she hurt in the process.

A sigh escaped Regina, shutting the book in her hands frustratedly. Nothing she seemed to do was good enough and not only could it cost Marian her life, but it could also cost Emma her free will. The blonde had made it quite clear of what her standing was and Regina couldn’t imagine what she must be thinking, being the only thing that stood between the town and Eris. She knew Emma, and she knew that given the right amount off pressure or if she were to be shoved just the slightest amount she would do what was best for the town no matter how it affected her.

Regina’s attention shifted away from the closed literature in her hands when she caught movement in front of her. The sorceress frowned, preparing to defend herself if the need be. Her eyes locked with
sky blue and a scowl formed on her face. Robin stood in the entryway, taking the form of what appeared to be a wounded puppy. As much as she cared for the man, he was the last person that Regina wanted to see in that moment.

‘Hello, Regina.’

‘What the hell are you doing here?’ hissed the sorceress, dropping her book down on the table beside her. ‘You shouldn’t be here.’

‘Can you blame me?’ The blond sighed. He took a step forward, Regina took a step back. ‘We need to talk. About everything—what I told you about still being in love with you. Marian. This new threat to the town—’

‘Robin, I fear that I can not save Marian, and the only way to save her means that you have to forget about me and somehow fall back in love with your wife. You need to forget about me, you need to stay away.’

The man shook his head and took another step forward. Regina returned in kind by taking another step back. Oddly, the sorceress found herself wishing for another interruption, perhaps in the form of a blonde with a fiery attitude.

‘I realized as much,’ informed Robin, his face still downcast. The man’s eyes shone with unshed emotions, pleading for Regina to take a step forward and melt into his arms.

‘Then, why are you here?’ Regina hissed angrily.

‘Honestly?’ Robin exhaled heavily. ‘My mind was in the forest, but my heart took me here.’

Regina shook her head and took another step back. She couldn’t listen to this, she couldn’t allow whatever it was between them to continue—not with Marian’s life on the line. The sorceress needed to put all of her focus on saving Robin’s wife and protecting Emma from Eris’s slimy clutches. There was no time to entertain the idea of a future with Robin. That chance slipped through her fingers years ago when she didn’t step into that tavern, she realizes that now.

Even if Marian did die, Robin still chose his wife over her. In his mind there was no choice. Regina was worth more than being second pick after the first one didn’t work out.

‘Robin.’ Regina paused, pursing her lips in disapproval. ‘You have to save her.’

‘Because it’s the right thing to do?’ He sounded defeated, as though the wind had been knocked out of him.

‘Because she’s your wife. And seeing you here? And hearing about your conflicted heart? I refuse to do it. You chose Marian and I respected that choice, so please stop. It’s torture.’

‘I’m sorry for that, I truly am.’

Another step forward, another step back.

‘But I’ve regretted it the moment I made it,’ hissed Robin. ‘I cannot just fall back in love with Marian. Not when I have you in my life.’

‘Which is why I can’t be in your life. Stop thinking about me, and start thinking about her,’ Regina narrowed her eyes at Robin, annoyance at his blatant recusal beginning to pick at her. ‘I mean it, Robin. You need to go.’
The sorceress passed by the man as she crossed the room, sidestepping any attempt he made to reach out and disappeared deeper into her vault for more answers than the feeble book that awaited her returned in the main area of the vault.

*

Emma’s head hurt from all the Latin and Greek from the past several hours. She hadn’t been exposed to this much since her last conversation with a minotaur. The blonde was decent enough with the languages after having picked it up as she went along. Sometimes she would still struggle with some of the words, but so what? Emma didn’t need to be fluent in either of the dead languages, just enough so that she could sort out an argument between a god and whoever they managed to piss off that particular day.

However, Elvish was not one of the dead languages she understood. Not to mention, she and the pointy-eared people did, in fact, not mix either. Let’s not even get started on what the Dark Elves thought of her. Emma was just glad that they didn’t pop around town like most magical creatures. She just got back into Regina’s good books and she did not want to have another you’re-an-idiot-Miss-Swan conversation.

Belle had been helpful in the aspects of locating a spell that’d help temporarily help strip Eris of her powers, at least long enough so that she and Emma could have a conversation on even ground. It had taken all night, but it was worth it when she stepped into the station and saw Elsa’s smile light up her entire face. The dragon had left a message on Regina’s phone, but apparently what she was occupied was more important than her.

It was strange how Belle was doing everything in her power to stay away from Gold as long as possible, having stayed out all night and now even offered to continue scouring through the library for even a drop more of information, as though she hadn’t done enough. Of course she was trying to make it up to them for keeping key information a secret, but everyone had already forgiven her.

No, this was much deeper. Emma believed that never in his right mind would Gold ever physically harm Belle, but she knew that whatever they had wasn’t healthy. In this world, it would classify under Stockholm syndrome and there was no one that could ever convince Emma otherwise. All that the dragon wished was that Belle would be honest with her and tell her what she was thinking.

‘And this spell, it will neutralize Eris’s powers? How certain are you?’

‘Like, 99.9998 percent sure. To me it sounds like something similar to what Hephaestus used to trap Ares and Aphrodite during one of their trysts. This spell will probably, hopefully somehow capture Eris with an unbreakable chain-link; Celestial Steel, the only earthly metal that one can use against monsters and gods.’

Elsa raised her eyebrows, leaning forward on the desk in front of her as she inspected the spell. A moment later she began to maneuver herself into the chair whilst Emma remained standing.

Happy was happily seated atop Emma’s head, inspecting the spell from afar like his companion. The exceed squinted his eyes, rubbing his chin dramatically for effect. If Emma could see him, then she would have rolled her eyes.

‘You seem to know a lot about ancient mythology, more than most,’ Elsa pointed out, frowning in frustration at the book in front of her. ‘One must wonder what you’ve seen in the past three years. It must have been exciting to see everything happen first hand?’

‘Oh, it was!’ Happy piped up, offering a cheeky smile. ‘We could tell you all about it tonight—’ the
feline paused, looking down at the paper once more. ‘—after we figure out this spell and put a stop to Eris’s stupid plans.’

Elsa smiled, inclining her head. The smile soon dropped as she continued to scan over the Elvish words, ‘Can either of you read this?’

‘Aye, sir!’

‘Happy.’

‘...No, sir.’

‘Elvish? No, we didn’t even see Lord of the Rings—’ Emma paused, waiting for some kind of reaction, only to have Elsa frown up at her in confusion. ‘Never mind. Belle translated it.’ Emma reached into the back pocket of her jeans and retrieved a piece of paper. She unfolded it and set it down on the book. ‘It tells us how to enact the spell. For once something magical comes with an instruction book.’

Happy reached back into his backpack and held out a large, oddly decorated candle. It was covered in different symbols and patterns, most of which Emma had no clue what they meant. The dragon accepted the item and set it down on the desk.

‘With both hands, hold the candle and then use your magic to light it. And then when you blow on it.’ Then, Bam! No more Let’s-manipulate-Emma-into-making-babies-of-pure-evil.

Elsa blushed slightly at Emma’s unashamed self, her cheeks turning a bright red color. Emma couldn’t help but snicker at her friend's bashfulness.

Clearing her throat, Elsa opted to change the subject, ‘Maybe then we can talk to her. We can find Anna. Get some real answers.’

‘Don’t underestimate the Goddess of bitchiness. If she wants to she can give us the silent treatment for all of eternity. She is capable of that given the whole immortal thing.’

‘Aye, sir!’

Emma smiled, reaching up to lift Happy by the back of his neck. She set the exceed down on the desk and turned to Elsa as he queen got to her feet.

‘Does your sister have magic?’

The queen shook her head and exhaled, ‘No.’ Elsa folded the paper in her grasp once more and proceeded to set it down on the desk. ‘Does anyone in your family have magic?’

‘No,’ shrugged Emma, scratching her eyebrow awkwardly. ‘Just me. No one to really help me with all this magical stuff but me.’

‘It’s hard when they look at you differently, isn’t it?’

Emma looked up sharply from the candle in her grasp, the sentence striking a nerve with her. The sorceress fumbled with the item in her grasp, having lost her grip on it for a moment. She swallowed hard and thought of the expressions on her family’s faces when they learned of her new abilities.

It was hard. They were often staring at her like she had grown a second head, they still did.

Shaking her head, the blonde’s grip tightened around the candle, ‘They—they don’t.’
It was a lie, an obvious one at that and both her friends picked up on it. Happy’s expression saddened and Elsa smiled weakly, respecting her reluctance to speak about her feelings enough to not push Emma any further.

‘You’re lucky,’ settled Elsa before inhaling sharply and flipping her gown aside. ‘Okay, shall we try this?’

‘Aye, sir!’ Happy agreed excitedly, plopping down on the desk and scooting closer to the edge so that he could swing his legs back and forth.

Emma chuckled in amusement before she took on a fighting stance. Elsa did the same, watching as the dragon snapped her fingers. The bud of the candle immediately lit up and Emma brought the candle closer to her lips. She took a deep breath and blew on the fire. The flame began to rise into the air, continuously growing in size as it crept towards the queen.

However, just as it reached Elsa’s wrist, beginning to wrap around them, a spark went off and the flame collapsed down onto the floor. Emma frowned down at the candle and blew out a breath of frustration.

‘Sorry,’ muttered Emma, still frowning at the item.

‘It’s fine,’ reassured Elsa. ‘Let’s try again?’

‘Later,’ Emma shook her head, slamming the candle down on the desk. ‘Happy and I are babysitting my baby bro. Mary Margaret has some issues to sort out with the board on the repairs that still need to be done.’

Elsa nodded her head in understanding. ‘Life goes on.’

Emma took a step towards Elsa and placed a firm hand on her should, squeezing softly. ‘We’re going to find her, okay?’

‘It’s okay,’ reassured Elsa, waving her off. ‘Go, I’ll be here.’

It took all of Emma’s energy to force herself to nod. She didn’t want her friend to stay here and wallow in her self-pity, but she and Happy needed to pick up her little brother. The dragon made a note to herself to bring baby bro back for some quality time here at the station. Perhaps it would take their minds off everything if they got to spend some time together.

‘Come on, little buddy,’ Emma ordered, motioning her head towards the exit. ‘Let’s go pick up the munchkin.’

*

‘Uh, diaper bag, stroller, milk—’

Sigh.

**Remember: No nuts.**

‘—Oh, remember no nuts. He’s eating solids, but your father is—’

*Deathly allergic, so he could be too.*

‘—Regina is bound to know everything already, but just in case—’
Boy. And I though Madame Mayor was a control freak. Thank the gods this woman did not raise me.

Neal gurgled, both feet stuck in his mouth. He mimicked what Emma believed she herself looked like at that age.

I don’t know. Kid’s lucky he even gets to have a helicopter/ control freak of a mother. I didn’t have anyone. This kid has mommy-and-me classes, the whole damn cake and he got to bloody scarf it all down in one go.

The young prince turned his blue eyes towards Emma and Happy, cooing as he reached for them.

“Mma!”

...Tsk. Manipulative little brat. Playing with my feelings like that and making me adore you rather than despise you. You’re lucky your cute.

Stupid cute ass baby—

‘—And don’t forget—’

‘Bedtime is six-thirty. Yes, ma, I heard you the gazillion other times you told me and I’m pretty sure that you’ve preached to Regina the other umpteenth times. Relax, we can take care of the little man for a couple of hours.’

Honestly, if she didn’t trust Emma and Happy to keep the kid alive until Regina came over to the loft to help within the hour, then there was clearly some miscommunication between them. For crying out loud this wouldn’t be the first time that they’d taken care of Neal and it definitely wasn’t going to be the last time.

‘Yeah,’ encouraged Happy. ‘We got this in the bag, Mrs. Mom!’

Before Mary Margaret could argue another point that they needed to address for another bizarre reason, Ashley practically bounced her way over to the area they had secluded themselves to whilst they traded Neal with one another like some shady dark web drug deal.

Emma smiled broadly at the blonde, glancing down at little Alex in her grasp. She had never been more satisfied than when she had made that deal with Rumple so Ashley could keep the little bundle of joy that sat on her hip.

Gods, it felt like such a long time since she had last seen the younger woman. Which, in reality, it was. They hadn’t specifically told the entire town of Emma’s extended time away, so no one knew except family members and the few people that they had decided to include.

‘Emma!’ Ashley greeted enthusiastically, bringing Emma into a tight hug despite her futile attempt at waving her hands in the air to decline any form of physical contact. When Ashley didn’t let up, Emma had no choice but to return the embrace.

‘Oh, Ashley, look at you, the baby whisperer.’

Happy frowned as he stared between the three women just as Emma was released, ‘You get baby whisperers?’

‘Hush, Happy.’
‘What? It’s a legitimate question.’

‘Oh, aren’t you the cutest little thing!’ Ashley squealed as she stared down at the bright yellow exceed, eyes lighting up with wonder. ‘You must be the famous Happy?

‘Aye, sir!’ The exceed nodded. ‘I’m a cat!’

Emma rolled her eyes in exasperation, ‘You’re an exceed, little buddy.’

‘That too!’

Mental face-palm.

The blonde turned to face Ashley, briefly glancing around at the small area. It was a rather cosy living-room. Much bigger than the one back at the loft. The interior design somehow fitted to match Ashley’s bubbly personality.

‘So, this is what you do here? You give sleeping tips and sing songs and—’

‘Oh, it’s more than that. It’s like having a support group. I mean, being a first-time mother is not easy.’

Emma pursed her lips at that. Anything bad she had thought about this entire I-want-to-give-everything-to-this-one-because-I-failed-the-first-one situation was doubled ten fold.

*And I mean really, really?!!*

Wasn’t it bad enough that it felt like little dude, no matter how much Emma loved him, was replacing her? Wasn’t it bad enough that Emma felt like she didn’t belong here at all anymore? It wasn’t as if the urge to leave was ever growing because all her presence did was put her loved ones in danger.

‘First-time mother?’ Emma parroted, wanting to scowl, but instead smacked an awkward smile onto her face.

She liked Ashley, she really did, but...

*What fresh hell is this?*

Mary Margaret and Happy seemed to pick up on this instantly, the latter narrowing his eyes and sending a dirty look towards Ashley. However, the little guy was nothing if not adorable and didn’t seem intimidating in anyway. Emma’s mother, however, spluttered as she tried to rectify the damage that Ashley had just inflicted.

‘Emma... *of course* I’m not a first time mother.’

The dragon frowned, grip tightening on the milk bottle in her grasp.

*Bullshit.*

*You left me, you didn’t raise me.*

‘Well, you kind of are,’ muttered Emma, finding it far more interesting to stare at Neal’s ocean blue eyes. Somehow she found comfort in them. ‘You’ve never raised a baby before. You’ve just put one through a magical wardrobe, where it had to grow up unwanted for twenty-eight years.’

‘Emma!’
Ashley shared an awkward glance with Aurora, who’d decided it was a good idea to join the conversation now of all times.

Clearly, she’d made a more grave mistake than the time she chose to touch the devil box in Granny’s.

Happy floated up to land on the stroller, watching his companion with sad and worried eyes. He could always tell when Emma’s emotions were running away from her. Usually she played off her pain in humor, much like she was trying to accomplish now.

‘No! No, it’s fine!’ Emma gave an awkward and unsure laugh. ‘It’s okay. I get it. This is exciting. Mommy and Me classes and songs and first steps. It all must be really exciting.’

...And cue the crickets.

Silence befell them all and Emma wanted to strangle someone.

*What the hell were they staring at?!

‘What?’

‘The bottle.’

Emma followed Aurora’s line of sight and noticed the milk glowing and bubbling, threatening to explode. The dragon released a labored sigh.

*Great.*

*Add Losing-control-of-my-powers to the list of things I gotta worry about.*

She set the bottle down into the cup holder of the stroller and briefly caught Happy’s eyes. The exceed instantly knew that this was bothering her much more than she cared to admit. Emma just knew that the exceed was going to broach the subject with her later, and she groaned internally at another hopeful speech.

She was so not in the mood.

‘Sorry, I must be a little revved up from practicing my magic to capture Eris.’ The dragon shook her head as well as her hands and tried to rid herself off the tension that knotted in her stomach. ‘Wooh. Okay.’

She reached for the gurgling baby boy... and Mary Margaret took a step back, cradling Neal closer to her.

It was like the moment you dropped a glass of milk. So, surreal. For a moment Emma thought that Mary Margaret had just slapped her through the face.

That infamously new Emma Swan/Dragon temper sparked. Her own mother didn’t trust her with Neal. Not because she thought Emma was incapable of caring for the kid, but because she thought differently about Emma. The dragon wasn’t human. She wasn’t normal. And this oddly felt like the time she came out to Mary Margaret when she was still under the curse. Not judging, but not entirely accepting either.

A frown crept onto Emma’s forehead and she glanced down to notice the same expression on Neal’s face, like he didn’t understand why he was being withheld from his *Mma.*
To save any further awkwardness Happy flew up and accepted Neal into his arms. Mary Margaret was hesitant to release the boy but the feline seemed to handle him easily enough, not to mention he was strong enough to carry both Regina and Henry at the same time. The mother relented, her eyes glancing nervously between her daughter, her son and the feline.

Before anyone could say anything, the cellphone on Emma’s pocket began to chime and she was all too eager to step away from them, not even looking her mother in the eyes.

Happy stared up at Mary Margaret, allowing Neal to pull and suckle on his right ear all he pleased whilst still having a tight grip on the boy. He frowned at the woman when their locked, sharing a silent conversation that he couldn’t put into words. Happy wanted the woman to understand that she had just hurt Emma. That she had just inflicted pain that he would have to take away sooner of later.

‘—Alright, I’ll be right there.’ Emma ended the call and stepped back into the circle, a frown still etched on her forehead. ‘Change of plan. Happy, head to Regina’s with baby bro. Eris has been spotted at the clocktower and I’m heading there with David, Elsa and the other deputies.’

‘Are you sure, Emma? I mean, we could reschedule—’

‘No, no.’ Emma shook her head, moodily shoving her phone back into her jeans’ pocket. ‘If you can’t trust me to take the kid, then you can trust Happy. He’s more normal than me.’

Before Mary Margaret could even think to respond, Emma disappeared in a wave of her hand.
Storybrooke, Mayoral Mansion—Recent Past

Regina finds that Happy isn’t as annoying as he once was. It’s much tolerable now than he had been before and she somehow he’s often more endearing than not. Even if he only had two braincells and one was staring at the one trying to think. Though despite what she thought of the feline, Emma trusted him enough to allow him to fly across town with her brother in his paws so that they could watch baby Neal together.

The sorceress watched the exceed and boy from afar, reclined to the couch in her study with the Storybook out on her lap. They were both seated on the blanket that Regina had thrown out for them in the middle of the room, Neal’s toys scattered near and far with Happy’s red backpack thrown somewhere in the mix as well. The exceed was munching away on a fish he had somehow procured from thin air whilst the boy was cooing and gurgling, pulling with all his strength on the feline’s left ear. It didn’t seem as though Happy minded for one moment given the look of complete contentment on his face.

As much as Regina wanted to focus her attention on the book in front of her, on Operation Mongoose to procure her happy ending, on Robin Hood and her slow disintegration of her love for him, she was utterly transfixed on them. It made her think of Emma and her feelings towards the blonde, made her wonder if she should even continue this ridiculous notion that she belonged with the thief. The thoughts of that morning and her confrontation with Robin only sprung forth more doubt within her and continued to fester and grow.

‘Hey, Mom?’

The sorceress jumped, fumbling with the book in her hands and quite nearly tossing it from the window as though she had been caught doing something wrong. Regina leapt to her feet in her fit, eyes wide and filled with panic.

‘I, uh, nothing!’

All eyes were on her now and Regina could feel the blush that spread across her cheeks. She caught Happy’s smirk over the fish in his mouth and scowled at him before she glanced over Henry’s attire. Her little boy, all grown up and dressed up in a... suit. Oh, he looked so handsome, staring at her with a frown of confusion with the grey tie in his hands. Henry probably hadn’t a clue how to tie it and had come to seek her aid.

‘Are you okay?’ The brunet questioned worriedly. ‘You seem a little jumpy.’

‘No, I’m fine,’ reassured Regina hastily, glancing between Henry and Happy as she wrung her hands together. Quickly, she changed the subject before anyone could draw attention to her odd demeanor. ‘Look at you all dressed up. What’s the occasion?’

‘I’m getting married.’

Immediately her face fell away, filling with horror and her eyes sparkled with one word:
Henry seemed so serious and nothing in his face gave him away.

‘What?’ questioned Happy, somehow having swallowed his fish whole. ‘Can I come? Please, please, please! Emma and I love parties! We’re so good at them too! Only causing a minimal amount of destruction each time!’

...And really, Regina wasn’t even surprised anymore.

‘No, I’m joking,’ reassured Henry with a laugh. ‘I’m too young to be getting married.’

‘And don’t you forget it,’ sniped Regina, placing a hand on her hip as she approached her son. She accepted the material he held out to her and placed it around his neck.

‘I’m going to work,’ explained Henry as much to her as he did to a now pouting Happy. ‘With Grandpa at the shop.’

‘Mr. Dad has a shop?’

‘My other grandpa.’

‘You can have more than one?’

Henry shook his head, snickering in amusement, ‘Yes, Happy. You can have more than one. Anyways, he said if I was gonna learn the family business, I’d have to represent the family business. Which would be fine if it didn't also mean wearing a tie.’

Regina patted the newly folded item gently and smiled broadly at the fifteen-year-old. ‘Well, I think you look handsome.’

‘I ho hoo!’ Happy exclaimed, once again munching around his fish.

‘Happy,’ scolded Regina. ‘Chew and swallow before you speak.’

‘Hou houh hihe Ehha.’

‘Oh for the gods’ sake.’

‘Easy,’ chuckled Henry, the voice of reason as always. ‘Give the poor guy a break. Neal’s busy trying to eat him and he probably hasn’t slept in a long time. Given how he stands guard around Emma each night.’

Happy visibly deflated, swallowing his fish whole for a second time. The feline glanced around nervously for a moment, looking anything but adorable with Neal drooling all over him.

‘You, uh, know about that?’

‘If I didn’t before, you just confirmed it.’

The feline scowled at Henry whilst the teenager just smirked proudly at having gotten a smidge of information from his mother’s closest friend.

‘Don’t tell Emma,’ warned Happy, pointing his paw threateningly into his direction. ‘I mean it.’

‘I won’t,’ reassured Henry. ‘You have my word.’
The feline gave Henry a hard look, considering whether he was telling the truth or not before he relented a moment later. Happy turned his attention to Neal, working on detaching the boy’s gums from his fur.

‘Good,’ his voice was so soft that Regina had nearly missed Happy having said anything at all. ‘Cause Emma can’t worry about anything else other than staying away from Eris.’

*

A stupid glass of water.

The only thing she said at all after causing Elsa to lose her temper was that she wanted a glass of water. It didn’t seem possible to even cause the Snow Queen to lose her temper. She seemed more like the type to bottle everything up.

Eris was captured and covered in chains made of Celestial Steel, seated on the chair in the interrogation room that Emma and David had dumped her in.

They were alone.

Emma didn’t need her voice of reason—Happy—banging a pot—which he usually did—yelling at the top of his lungs that she was really an idiot sometimes. Emma knew this and she knew that it was also a bad idea to continue questioning the goddess whilst she felt that constant magical pull, telling her to take off the golden cuff wrapped tightly around her wrist.

Eris didn’t even seem bothered by the fact that she was captured. In fact she seemed pleased, like she was moments away from getting exactly what she wanted. Her behavior was blaring warning bells that Emma chose to ignore all because she reasoned that she was going to be fine. Eris was the one in chains, not her, so there was nothing to worry about.

Except there was.

Had she focused on anything other than the seductress in front of her, she would have noticed that the doorhandles had frozen over the minute she stepped back into the room. She would have noticed that Eris was exactly where she wanted to be.

‘So,’ Eris began after taking a long, slow sip from the glass of water before setting it down once more. ‘How are things?’

‘Seriously? You’re going to talk to me like we’re drinking buddies who haven’t seen each other in a couple of weeks?’

‘And are you going to continue pretending that you feel absolutely nothing for me? Galavanting around town with that wench and your pretend family.’

‘Leave ‘Gina and my family out of this,’ spat Emma. ‘They aren’t pretend anything. They’re my family and that’s it.’

The silence stretched on Eris’s smile ever growing.

Emma wished that she wasn’t so smug about whatever she was being smug about. She wished that there wasn’t a unsettling feeling that began to form in her stomach. That Eris hadn’t just struck a nerve.

Eris knew Emma better than most—intimately, physically and emotionally. It was how gods and
goddesses could manipulate their latest conquest to bend to their will however they pleased. They showed actual interest and genuine feelings and mortals fell for it—hook, line and sinker. They were too perfect, too good, just too irresistible and too shiny. Like a forbidden fruit that was unlimited until it was limited.

‘The family that you think you have, they may love you, but they also fear you.’

*It’s hard when they look at you differently, isn’t it?*

‘No, they don’t!’

‘You’ve never seen them wince at your power?’ Eris raised a curious eyebrow, her Greek accent etching and pulling at both Emma’s resolve and the cuff on her wrist. ‘You’ve never seen a twinge of panic behind their eyes? Not even once?’ Eris stared at Emma in mock disbelief. ‘I find that hard to believe, my love.’

_Are you sure, Emma? I mean, we could reschedule—_

_No, no. If you can’t trust me to take the kid, then you can trust Happy. He’s more normal than me._

Emma stood up, knocking the chair back as she glared at Eris. However, it barely held any bite. She couldn’t be mad at Eris, it wasn’t in her abilities given that she was still under the goddess’s spell and would be for as long as their tryst didn’t shire any children.

‘They love me for who I am, including my powers.’

‘Please,’ Eris rolled her eyes. ‘The only two people who’ve ever loved you is myself and that pet of yours. Your family doesn’t love you, they tossed you away like were nothing more than a used toy they had gotten bored with.’

‘They had a reason for that.’

Her words were defensive and filled with anger. Not because she was growing upset with Eris, but because she doubted herself. She doubted her words like she had always doubted them.

Eris paused before taking a different approach, ‘Do you remember when you were struck with Dragon Fever? After your first transformation, when I cared for you?’

‘How could I?’ scoffed Emma, crossing her arms over her chest as she stared down at Eris. ‘I was hallucinating off my ass. Thought Happy was a chicken and tried to eat him, then thought my name was Jack and I had to climb a beanstalk to kill a giant... Ended up climbing a tree, thinking it was a beanstalk and started singing about a mongoose and a panda that were baking a cake. Hmm, am I missing anything?’

Eris face morphed from sick satisfaction to a soft inviting smile. Emma hesitated and nearly gave in to the voices that clouded her judgement.

‘You hallucinated your parents,’ informed Eris. ‘You were so angry with them for having given you up, that you felt unwanted for twenty-eight years.’

_You left me! You left me alone! You sent me away! How could you do that?! I was nothing! I had no one!_

Emma felt a headache forming from all the pulling in the different directions. Memories of that night surfaced from all the corners in her mind where she had repressed them, forced them away, shut
them out, so that she wouldn’t have to continuously live with that pain and the guilt she felt for hating her parents.

*I was your only child! Why didn’t you want me?*

The dragon blew out a puff of smoke through her nose.

How could she forget that?

How could she call Eris a liar?

‘I remember,’ muttered Emma, clenching her jaw.

‘They used you to break a curse, *Em-ma*. They’re still using your powers.’

‘That’s not true.’

Emma was grasping at straws, she knew it. Her chest was heaving, her canines were digging into her cheek as she bit it in an attempt to find some form of outlet.

*They love me, right?*

*They don’t just want me because I have powers. No, no. They’re not like that.*

A little voice, Mary Margaret’s, told her that of course it wasn’t true. We love you.

Then why didn’t she want to give her Neal? Why did they stare at her like she was some alien from another world, like she was some kind of monster that needed to be shoved around and controlled, and put down if the need arose. Why did she think these awful thoughts and feel the way that she did if it wasn’t true?

‘Isn’t it?’ whispered Eris, her voice like a lullaby soothing Emma into a deep slumber. ‘How many times have you saved them? How often have you felt more like this savior rather than their daughter?’

Emma stared at Eris with heavy eyes, and the goddess could tell that she had her lover’s attention.

‘All it takes is one small mistake, *Em-ma*. One accident. And you and your gifts will go from being their salvation to their worst nightmare.’

Emma stepped away from Eris, uncrossing her arms and clenching her fists.

*Don’t listen to her. She’s just messing with your head.*

Calm down. Focus. Ignore her and you’ll be fine.

‘And now? They’ve chosen to have a *new* child.’

Emma trembled as tears streamed over her cheeks. She couldn’t listen anymore. She needed to leave, she needed to stop listening to the poison this woman was pouring into her ears.

‘And don’t you think that they thank the gods every day that he was born *normal*.’


She wasn’t normal. She was a freak, a monster. A creation of the gods to play their ridiculous games
and to wreck havoc upon the world.

Emma looked up at her reflection in the tinted glass of the interrogation room. Her green eyes were slits, her forehead beginning to transform into scales but not yet taking on the color of her red leathery skin.

‘They love me.’

Her words were empty; a last attempt to convince herself that what Eris said wasn’t true.

‘You can’t love someone that you don’t understand,’ reasoned Eris, leaning back into her chair and then proceeding to cross one leg over the other. ‘And they never will, my love.’

The wall facing the outside of the Sheriff station blew up, scattering in every direction.

* 

There were many forms of a dragon that a human could achieve. One of which they were stuck in between a transformation and their human form. This was called Dragon Fever. It was painful as it was dangerous, not just to the beings themselves but to the people around them as well. Dragon Fever was a result of great emotional distress where their magic drawn from the energy around them begins to literally poison their bodies.

It’s also the state of which all dragons mate after they had gotten over the initial transformation into the humanoid form, and if they survived.

However, that was the least of Emma’s concerns as she scrambled from the interrogation room, clutching at her throat as she choked on all of the magical energy that she drew in. Her whole body was on fire and it felt like her body was literally rejecting her entire being. No one could see her like this and she couldn’t afford to hurt anyone either.

She needed Happy. Or Regina. Probably Regina more than she needed Happy.

Emma wasn’t thinking clearly. The pain was too unbearable.

‘Emma!’

Oh, Gods. Please no.

‘Emma, are you alright?!”

The dragon looked up from where she knelt on the ground, still staring at the whole cavalry; Hook, August, David, Mary Margaret, Belle, Henry, Happy and Gold. They were all there.

Emma only wanted Happy. He would know what to do as he had dealt with this before.

She took a choked breath, buying her only a moment to warn them with a loud Wait before she continued to claw at her neck.

David and Hook moved to rush towards her, but Happy was quick to fly between them.

‘Stop! Don’t go any closer! Unless you want your butts handed to you!”

‘What’s wrong with her?’ Belle questioned, her eyes wide with horror and fear. ‘What did Eris do to her?’
‘It’s Dragon Fever,’ explained the feline, his jaw setting firmly. He held out his paws in an attempt to keep them away from his friend. ‘It wasn’t Eris that did this but Emma herself. Don’t go any closer unless you want to set her off.’

Emma seemed to calm down at that, wobbly making her way to her feet. She didn’t want to hurt them, she didn’t want to hurt anyone.

She couldn’t control it even if she tried.

The hallucinations were quick to follow, the world morphing into strange colors and the people in front of her taking forms of different creatures. Emma moved backwards, holding her hands up in an attempt to defend herself.

‘Keep your distance! I can’t control it!’

Of course, Hook didn’t listen and swatted Happy out of the way. Just as he gripped Emma’s wrist, the dragon flailed. Her hand shot out, causing the electrical bulbs to burst. The next moment the street lamp came crashing down towards the pirate, nearly falling on top of him if it was for David. Instead the lamp struck the deputy and he went down onto the ground.

For a brief moment, the fog was cleared, enough for Emma to see the damage she had inflicted. She stared in horror as Mary Margaret rushed over to her husband, beginning to help him to his feet.

‘Emma!’

The dragon glanced sharply over to her mother.

_It’s hard when they look at you differently, isn’t it?_

_If you can’t trust me to take the kid, then you can trust Happy. He’s more normal than me._

_You can’t love someone that you don’t understand._

She ran, ignoring everyone’s calls to keep her from leaving.

**Storybrooke, Regina’s Vault—Present**

That moment when you drop a glass of milk is surreal. Emma’s heart was the glass of milk as she watched Regina kissing Robin Hood. She’d never seen them together before. Only hearing of it had been painful, but this... this was more than torture, more than cruelty.

The tears that streamed over Emma’s cheeks were glowing a light blue color due to all the magical energy that threatened to burst forth. There was nothing she could do but stand and watch as the man who had everything take one more thing from her. The man who was supposed to work on getting his wife back.

_Hell, wasn’t Marian in the other room?_

_Oh, Gods. Was that Neal’s carrier there on the table?_

As if Regina sensed someone was watching them, the woman suddenly broke the kiss, much to Robin’s displeasure. She turned her head and stopped dead when she saw Emma.

She must have looked awful, what with her disheveled clothing, the scale like appearance the skin of her forehead had taken and the bright glowing tears that dripped to the floor.
Regina immediately untangled herself from Robin and took a step away from the man. Her head darted between him and the distressed blonde.

‘Emma... I... this...’ She took a step forward towards the distressed woman. ‘This isn’t what it—’

Emma didn’t allow for her to finish. Instead she turned on her heels and took off the same way that she had came.

‘Emma, wait!’

She could hear Regina’s heels clicking behind her, racing after her in an attempt to catch up with her. Emma wasn’t about to allow herself to be caught by yet another person who couldn’t possibly love her. Who would never, ever even consider her as a happy ending.

Just as she reached the outside once more, she disappeared in a puff of white smoke.

*

‘You were right.’

The town shone below them as they stood staring out over the millions of little lights. Eris stood behind Emma, the latter had yet to turn around and see her after the last few hours.

The goddess smiled.

‘Of course I was. Are you ready now, my love? To abandon your silly notions of escaping our fate together?’

‘...’

Eris waited, her smile ever growing when she noticed Emma’s shoulders shagging with defeat.

‘Will you leave then? Will you not harm anyone?’

‘Yes, my love.’

Eris stepped closer, placing a kiss on Emma’s neck after she moved her long blonde locks aside. Emma melted into her touch and removed the golden cuff around her wrist. It dropped to the ground and landed with a clink.

Behind them, a beautiful double bed appear. Its frame made of oak and the duvet a luscious red.

The goddess grinned when Emma finally turned around and lifted her bridal style into her strong, powerful arms. She giggled mischievously when Enma began to make her way towards the bed.

**Storybrooke—Past**

*She’s not coming back, Charming!*

*Yeah, she abandoned you all over again, Orphan boy!*

*No wonder Robin Hood left your mom! It’s all your fault, Little Prince!*

Henry was never one to pick fights. That part his ma had made perfectly clear when he’d punched a kid’s lights out back in New York for making fun of the fact that he didn’t have a father. However, Emma taught him that whenever someone made fun of someone else or fun of his family members,
then it was time to step in and... well, that was the example that she set for him.

Today, however, those kids had struck a nerve. He couldn’t care less about Robin, but it made him wonder if it was his fault that Emma left. That she left because of him and not because of his mom.

Now, Henry sat outside the principal’s office, where she, Kathryn, had tried to reach the route of his problems and why he had begun to act out as of late. Kathryn was his mother’s friend, even after everything, and he liked her well enough not to play pranks on her. However, all he wanted now was to go home and forget that he had ever been born. Especially given the fact that his mother was going to kill him for his split lip, black eye and bruised cheek.

His ribs hurt a bit too.

‘Assholes,’ Henry muttered furiously.

At least the other kids were worse for wear, given that he’d broken ones jaw. His mother might not be pleased with the fact that Emma had sent him to self-defense classes when they had been living in New York, but it would be worth it if the kids never picked on him or his friends ever again.

‘Henry Daniel Mills!’

The brunet resisted the wince that threatened to overtake him as he looked to where his mother had just stormed into the room, a frightened secretary came barging in after her a moment later. A sigh escaped the boy as he reached for his backpack underneath his seat, tossing it leisurely over his shoulder.

‘What is this I hear about you starting a fight?’

‘I didn’t start it,’ huffed Henry petulantly, staring up at his mother in defiance. ‘I just finished it.’

‘Well, then I feel so much better,’ spat the brunette. ‘Do you have any idea what you put me through when Katherine called me, informing me that my son, my little prince had gotten into a fist fight at school? A fist fight of all things!’

Henry scowled at the nickname in such a public setting but bit his tongue.

He wasn’t going to lash out at her because of some idiots who were jealous about the fact that he had so many family members that he didn’t have the slightest of clues what to do with them.

‘It was nothing,’ insisted Henry, failing to meet his mother’s eyes. ‘Those guys were just being jerks.’

‘Henry, look at me when you talk,’ warned Regina, barely containing her temper as she clutched onto her purse so tightly that it turned her knuckles completely white.

The brunet dared to look into her russet eyes and felt his heart shatter at the disappointment that he saw in them. He wanted to cry, to at the very least tell her about the pain that he was in. Instead, he kept his tongue, knowing it would only worsen her own suffering if he were to burden her with his.

‘I don’t know what’s gotten into you,’ stated Regina. ‘You stomp around the house like a moody five-year-old, you spend most of your time in your room, you don’t help around the house in any way. You pick fights at school, injuring yourself and... and you broke another child’s jaw? I—I’m at the end of my rope here, Henry.’ The brunette grasped Henry by his shoulders, ‘Please, just tell me what’s wrong and I will do everything in my power to make it better. Do you want me to go after Emma? Is that it?’
Henry clenched his jaw at the mention of his other mother. It made him hesitate as well. However, he steeled his nerves.

‘I’m fine, okay? You’re overreacting.’ He then pushed pass her and the secretary.

He didn’t tell her he loved her.

He didn’t tell her that he didn’t blame her for what happened between her and Emma.

He didn’t tell her that he was sorry.

He just bit his cheek and kept his tongue.

Chapter End Notes

So, I’m heading for an MRI tomorrow for my knee. At this point the pain just makes me want to cut it off and be done with it, but that’s a terrible idea, thus I wrote a chapter rather than that.

Anyways, I’m sorry for the chapter—not really—but there was a lot of feels and emotions, and I really enjoyed writing it ’cause it makes me think of how messy my own love life is... or lack there of...
Good morning, dearies.

First of, I appreciate all the comments, kudos and bookmarks. It honestly makes my day.

Secondly, as much as I do appreciate you guys and the fact that you’re taking the time to read my story, some things are just going to unfold the way that I see them and the way that I’ve planned out. I’ve been thinking a lot about some comments about how the kiss between Robin and Regina shouldn’t have happened, and whilst I truly dispise Robin at times as well, this is my story and it’s all a part of a bigger plan.

Anyways, thanks for the lovely feedback, again. And enjoy!

It had been so easy to sneak out with Henry. The kid was definitely Emma’s son given how he knew of all the secret passages, entrances and exits around the loft. Someone really should have kept a better eye on them if they didn’t want them to go galavanting through the forest on their own.

Oh, wait.

Happy was the one in charge of supervising Henry whilst the others worked downstairs on Operation Emma, as the kid dubbed it.

Oops.

Oh, well. There was no turning back now. They had come his far and Happy could only prey to the gods that Eris hadn’t reached her before they did. Then again, she had been out here all night with no shelter whatsoever from the goddess. Their luck was not that good, especially when the horrible feeling that something did happen was ever growing.

Happy was upset with most of the people that now stood in the loft, arguing with one another where Emma could be; Hook, because he had grabbed Emma. Mr. Dad and Mrs. Mom for not being there for their daughter. Regina, for whatever it is she did. And Rumplestiltskin, because Happy was sure he did at least something.

‘Do you think she’ll be okay?’

Happy turned his head towards Henry. The was enough space between them to fit another person, but Happy was flying close enough to see the worry in the boy’s eyes. It was in Happy’s nature to be drastically enthusiastic about everything, to see the hope in a hopeless situation because Emma was Emma, and she was more powerful than any enemy.

However, he didn’t know what to do or think. He didn’t know in what kind of a condition Eris would have left her if she found her. He didn’t know what kind of condition she would be in even if Eris didn’t find her. Emma couldn’t be alone during Dragon Fever. Whilst she was at her most powerful, she was also at her most vulnerable. The possibility of her dying was more than just 50/50.

‘Stupid Eris did a number on her,’ muttered Happy, trying and failing to keep the despair from his
voice. ‘I’d like to think that she would be perfectly fine, since she’s Emma, but I dunno. I don’t
know what to do or feel. It’s not the first time I’ve been in a situation like this, but it’s the first time
Emma’s ever shut me out like this.’

‘What do you think Eris will have done to her?’

‘I don’t know, but she wants a baby, so...’

‘...’

Silence hung between them for a moment. The only sounds being the chirping of the birds, the
whispers of the wind through the trees and the noises that Henry’s shoes made as the sticks crunched
beneath them.

‘Do you think—’

‘No,’ Happy shook his head, already knowing what he was thinking. ‘Eris is many things, but she’s
not like the other gods. She really does love Emma, in her own weird way and it wouldn’t have been
like that.’

‘Are you sure?’

‘Positive.’

The two stopped in their tracks.

Emma stood in a small clearing between the trees. She stood pacing like a wild animal, shaking her
hands up and down. The dragon seemed more distressed than when they had seen her the previous
day, and the time away had done nothing to calm her or her Dragon Fever.

Red and grayish-cream scales littered her skin like patches. It seemed as though her magic was out of
control as well. Sparks of white energy surged from her palms, but the shaking did nothing to soothe
them.

‘Mom?’ Henry spoke loudly, immediately catching her attention.

It was strange that she hadn’t sensed them moments prior. All of her senses had to be overwhelmed
and highly alerted due to the Fever. Her thoughts had most likely been keeping her preoccupied, so
she wouldn’t have been able to pay attention to anything else except trying to calm herself down.

The dragon turned towards them—eyes wide, blond locks frizzled. Emma held her hands up towards
them and immediately took a step back.

‘Henry, Happy?’ She glanced in between them with wide slit eyes. ‘What the hell are you doing
here?’

‘I’ve been looking for you all night,’ answered Henry, eyes wide as he took in his mother. The
teenager swallowed subtly, determined not to allow his mother to think that he was afraid of her.
Especially after what happened the previous day. ‘Everyone has. We’re all worried about you, Ma.’

‘Kid,’ Emma’s eyes flitted to and from Happy. ‘I told everyone to stay away. I can’t control
myself.’ The dragon’s slitted eyes landed on her best friend. With a pleading look, she begged,
‘Happy, tell him. It’s too dangerous. I need to fix this myself.’

The feline hesitated. Deep down, he knew that she was right, but Happy also knew that Emma
always focused on what was best for others instead of what was best for herself. If she were to be alone right now... Well, Happy didn’t think that she was even capable of looking after herself in the current state that she was in. She needed them. That much was obvious.

Together, he and Henry took cautious steps towards her, hands—and paws—held out so that they didn’t alarm her dragonic instincts.

This was an idiotic idea, but Happy could see the pain Emma was in. Besides, he had fish for breakfast. He’s dying a happy feline today if things go poorly.

‘No,’ insisted Happy. ‘I know you’re scared, Emma. I know that you don’t want to hurt us which is why you’re staying away. However, we can help you. We want to help you.’

‘Happy,’ Emma growled, taking another step back. ‘Take Henry back to the loft. Now.’

Henry gained the look of a stubborn donkey, refusing to go where Emma wanted him to, or perhaps he looked like that of a cat as he stared at his watery doom that everyone else knew as a bath.

He wasn’t going to allow his mother to suffer through this alone.

Whatever this was.

‘You always run when things are the hardest, Ma,’ informed Henry, no accusation or scrutiny in his voice. The teenager was sympathetic and wanted to know why she couldn’t just let him help. ‘You push away those who care most about you because you’re scared; that if they see that you’re not perfect, then they’re going to run from you.’

Emma’s shoulders shagged, ‘Kid, I’m scared I’m going to hurt you.’

‘You just have to trust us, Em.’

Tentatively, they neared the savior to the point where they were standing right in front of her.

‘Henry, Happy, just wait. I—’

Reaching forward, Henry tentatively wrapped his hand around his mother’s wrist. In a flash, Emma’s magic surged and released a dangerous blast of energy. It sent Henry flying through the air whilst Happy covered his ears and closed his eyes with all his strength. The boy landed with a thud, his head smacking against the rocks as he made his descent.

‘Henry!’ Emma and Happy cried out in unison.

They stormed to his side, Happy running on all fours as they tried to reach the likely injured Henry. Once they were within arm’s reach, Emma immediately held herself back as she suddenly remembered the reason why her son was on the forest floor in the first place.

‘Henry, are you okay?’ Happy questioned, trying to help the boy sit up.

Groaning, Henry reached to the back of his head where he revealed his hand to be covered in blood from his wound.

‘I’m—I’m fine.’

Emma stared in horror at what only she had done. She took a step back, then another. ‘Is that—Is that blood?’ The dragon stumbled a little as she turned away. ‘What have I done?’
Happy could see the panic and the urge to run clear in his pseudo parent’s eyes. Momentarily, the exceed’s head darted between Emma and Henry, who rose to his feet shakily. Once he was certain that the teenager was now okay, he turned his attention back towards the dragon.

‘It was an accident, Emma,’ Happy tried to reassure. ‘It’s okay. Just calm down—’

An involuntary roar tore through Emma’s throat, making Henry jump in fright. Happy stood his ground. He knew that his friend was growing only more upset as each moment past and that her magic was only going to become more unstable.

The dragon roared again like she was in pain and dropped onto all fours. It made the exceed sick to even think about it, but he knew that he needed to get Henry out of there. For his safety as well as Emma’s wellbeing.

‘We’ll find away to help,’ promised Happy. ‘I’ll find you, but I’ll take Henry home for now.’

Emma nodded her head up and down. All Happy could do now was be thankful that she hadn’t shot the offer down or that the idea of him trying to help her now made her condition worse.

‘We can’t leave her here,’ hissed Henry, stubbornly trying to take a step forward. However, Happy flew up and intercepted him. ‘She’s hurt.’

‘This isn’t helping,’ Happy pointed out, glancing slightly back at Emma. ‘We need to go tell the others that we at least found her. She needs to be alone for a little while longer until we can find something that can help.’

Henry hesitated, but ultimately knew that the exceed was right. He looked past Happy to his mother, ‘We’ll fix this, Ma. I promise.’

They took off with a speed close to being inhuman as another roar tore from Emma’s mouth.

*Storybrooke, The Woods—Recent Past*

A wave of energy released in one short blast, leveling several trees whilst completely uprooting the ones that were closest. Heavy breaths filled the air from a luxurious blood red oak bed, steam filling the air as well from the lovers breathing.

A raspy giggled escaped Eris as Emma pulled the blanket back to reveal their heads. She still lay beneath Emma, trying to catch her breath after the last few hours of physical activity. Even Emma couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped her as she fell to the side, reveling in the familiarity that she shared with the raven haired beauty.

‘You still have it, Em-ma,’ whispered Eris seductively. She moved to lie up on her elbow, facing towards her lover. ‘I’ve yet to encounter another being with skill as you.’

‘You’re not too bad yourself either,’ snickered Emma, glancing up at the clear starry sky above them. Her smile then fell away as she looked back towards Eris, noticing the way that her red eyes watched her intently. ‘I’ve missed you, you know.’

Eris smirked mischievously, ‘As much as that confession does tickle my fancy, I feel the need to remind you that you’ve not missed me in the slightest. You’ve missed the idea of me, of having someone.’

Emma grumbled, ‘I don’t get you. You say you love me, but you always push me away.’
Rolling her eyes, the goddess sat up. She dragged long delicate fingers through her tussled locks before she spoke, ‘Oh, please. Don’t get all emotional on me now. You and I—we’re a means to an end. Always have been, always will be. I’m a goddess, for the sake of the gods. Chaos and Discord is far more enjoyable and entertaining than any silly notion of love or... peace.’ She made a face as though the word rocked her very core.

A frown graced the blonde’s features as she too sat up, sitting against the bed frame. ‘Can I ask you something?’

‘I don’t know,’ drawled Eris, glancing back over her bare shoulder. ‘Can you? Or did the cat catch your tongue?’

‘You’re worse than Happy,’ muttered Emma, releasing a labored sigh. ‘Fine. May I ask you something?’

‘Yes, my love,’ agreed Eris, continuing to tend to her beautiful locks. ‘Ask away.’

‘You...’ Emma frowned, a knot forming in her stomach. ‘You wouldn’t happen to have anything to do with why Robin was in Regina’s vault last night... would you?’

Eris’s mischievous smile only grew as she glanced back at her lover, her red orbs sparkling in amusement. ‘Oh, I may have whispered a few words in the thief’s ear of suggestion. Then when Regina began to push him away I couldn’t help but encourage her to accept his advances.’

Emma’s eyes widened in shock and horror, ‘You... You did this?’

‘Well, how else was I going to get what I wanted from you?’ Eris scoffed, not even glancing in Emma’s direction now. ‘Besides, I only told you this because I’m going to erase your mind of this conversation. I still need you to be a little upset with your true love for now.’

‘What?’ Emma scowled. ‘What the hell are you talk—’

Eris sighed, waving her hand to render her lover unconscious. She then proceeded to rise to her feet and allowing her clothing to appear against her flesh a moment later. The goddess then turned towards Emma, placing a hand on her hip.

‘Oh, this is going to be so much fun.’

Storybrooke, Blanchard Loft—Present

Twelve hours.

Twelve long, agonizing hours of listening to the handless wonder and wooden puppet bicker. Of listening to an amateur of a sorceress yammer on about her concerns for Emma. Of listening to a shepherd list his regrets of the previous days events. Of listening to Snow White talk to all the woodland creatures that they came across that barely knew how to store food for the winter let alone their blonde friend.

Regina was exhausted and she was beyond rage, and the reason why she hadn’t killed everyone else was because she herself had her list of regrets. All if them involved one man and a kiss that never, ever, ever should have happened.

Just seeing those big fat tears rolling over Emma’s cheeks made Regina aware of the fact that it wasn’t fate or some author that needed to ruin her life. She did it marvelously to herself and it seemed like she was still a perfectionist at it. The moment Emma had turned tail and ran was the moment that
Regina had realized she might as well have pulled the savior’s heart from her chest and crushed it herself.

Gods, they were both fools.

They’ve been tiptoeing around it so long and Regina’s only just caught on that they were even playing a game at all. She’d been blind and she hadn’t even realized it.

Emma was a fool in love and she had been a fool not to see it.

Now it could quite possibly be too late. This could have been the last straw, and Emma could jump through a portal once more and simply choose not to return ever again.

The entrance to the loft barged open loudly, the wood threatening to splinter against the wall. Regina walked through, a scowl present on her face. The woman’s heels clicked on the ground as she literally had to keep herself under control instead of lighting everything she saw before her on fire.

The Charming’s, the deputies and Elsa followed afterwards, ruefully oblivious of the struggle inside the former Evil Queen.

‘That is the last time we follow directions from a squirrel,’ snapped Regina as she turned on her heels to face the others. ‘We’ve lost valuable time of actually searching for Emma. Instead we’ve been galavanting around the forest like buffoons, all because Snow White needed to use her animal-talking membership card before it expires this month.’

‘You’d think that a big yellow driving machine would be easier to find,’ grumbled Killian, plopping himself down into one of the kitchen chairs. From his leather jacket’s inner pocket, he removed his rum and took a long swig.

‘If you’d been paying attention,’ began August, plucking the rum from Killian’s hand, ‘which you haven’t, you’d have noticed that the bug is still parked at Granny’s. She hasn’t once driven it since she’s come back, you nimrod.’

Seeing the argument about to escalate, Mary Margaret stepped in, ‘Maybe she doesn’t want to be found.’

Regina scoffed as she crossed her arms over her chest. ‘Oh really?’ She offered a mocking smile. ‘What was your first clue?’

‘Enough,’ ordered Elsa. ‘Fighting will not bring Emma to us, nor will it provide a way for us to find her. We need to work together here or else that Eris woman is going to win.’

Mary Margaret tsked and glanced down in shame, ‘Something tells me that she already has.’ The woman then pushed off the kitchen counter and then tried to move past David and towards the door. ‘This was a bad idea; coming home. We should be out there searching for our daughter.’

Grabbing his wife by her shoulders, David stopped her from taking another step. He bent down so that he could look her directly in the eyes. ‘Hey, this isn’t your fault.’

The woman opened her mouth to protest, renewing her efforts to push past her husband. David, however, was stubborn enough to stop her in her tracks.

‘It isn’t,’ he insisted. ‘We’ll find Emma, but we’ve been searching all night, and we haven’t come any further than where we had been since we’d started. Not to mention, everyone’s exhausted.’
David looked towards the others and Mary Margaret followed his gaze. Killian and August sat together on the kitchen chairs, both trying to keep the other awake by shoving them in the ribs, Elsa had bags under her eyes and Regina needed a coffee the size of herself and then some.

The prince continued, eyes pleading with the pixie haired woman, ‘We refuel, we regroup, and then we find our daughter. Okay?’

The fight in Mary Margaret drained instantly. Charming was right. They needed to regain their energy if they were going to find Emma let alone talk some sense into her.

Nodding, the woman smiled weakly, ‘Okay.’

Most of the occupants in the loft jumped when the door slammed open a second time, revealing both Henry and Happy. The latter seemed far less... happy this morning than he had seemed the previous evening.

Given the brooding condition that the exceed had been in the previous evening that was saying quite a lot.

Henry on the other hand was far from being remotely okay too.

‘You don’t have to look anymore,’ informed Henry, shoulders slumped and feet dragging as the two made their way farther into the apartment.

‘Henry!’ Regina and Mary Margaret exclaimed in unison, both making their way over towards the two partner in crimes.

Immediately, Henry took a step back, adamant to continue on with his mother and grandmother fussing over his wellbeing.

‘We told you to stay here with...’ Regina’s eyes narrowed as she looked towards Happy. Eyeing the creature with a glare as he flew onto the dining table. ‘Of course. Why am I not surprised?’

‘Can it, scary-mean-lady,’ huffed the exceed, crossing his arms over his chest.

The sorceress’s hand sparked with magical energy, but she still couldn’t quite get her abilities to function how they were supposed to. Instead, small sparks ran over her hands as she clenched them into fists.

‘I do beg your pardon?’ Her voice hissed with danger and warning, making everyone’s eyes in the loft rise towards the ceiling.

Happy, sensing the danger, but realizing that there were more important issues for the time being, carried on, ‘We found Emma.’

That, at least, changed everyone’s tune. The two deputies flew off the kitchen chairs and Elsa took a step closer to the group. Charming and Mary Margaret were speaking over each other, overwhelming not only Henry, but Happy as well.

Regina’s temper sparked again.

‘Enough!’ She growled, then in the same breath. ‘Where is Emma? Why didn’t you bring her back here?’

Henry shook his head, and winced in pain. He reached to the back of his neck where his hands
retrieved a few more droplets of blood.

‘Because she’s in bad shape. Really, really bad shape.’ His shoulders slumped in defeat and he glanced back towards Happy. They both seemed defeated, but Happy kept a furious expression as his thoughts troubled him to no end. ‘I thought that we could help, but we only ended up making it worse.’

Mary Margaret took a step towards Henry, ‘Come with me, I’ll clean you up in the bathroom.’

‘I’ll be there in a moment,’ reassured Regina, reaching to Henry’s shoulder and giving it a soft squeeze as they walked past her. She then turned back towards Happy as the two of them disappeared behind them. ‘Define specifically what Emma’s condition is, cat.’

Happy pursed his lips, glancing past the group to where Mary Margaret and Henry had stepped into the bathroom. His brows furrowed past he returned his attention to the rest of the group.

‘She was with Eris.’

It was like watching Robin and Marian embrace each other that very first time in the diner. It was like learning that Emma had left all over again. Regina hadn’t the words to describe what she was feeling in that moment, but all she wanted to currently do was run a sword right through a particular goddess that came to mind.

The group around her seemed to take the news on some scale close to her own horror. Killian and August shared uncertain looks whilst both David and Elsa looked like two animals caught in oncoming traffic.

Elsa was the first to break the silence that had descended upon the room, ‘As in...’ she trailed off as she swallowed a thick lump in her throat. ‘As in with Eris. Like they—’

‘Yes, Miss Arendelle,’ hissed Regina. ‘Do I need to spell it out for you or would hand drawn pictures suffice?’

Happy rolled his eyes. ‘That’s not what matters right now—’

Hook raised a surprised eyebrow, ‘The lovechild of the Goddess of Chaos and the Savior shouldn’t be a concern? I’m sorry mate, but I’m going to have to disagree with you on that one.’

‘No,’ Happy shook his head. ‘I mean, it is a little concerning, but what matters now is that we get to Emma before she does something stupid. The fever spiked and if we don’t find some way to calm her down...’ Happy trailed off, a look of sadness overcoming his features. He glanced uncertainly to Regina as though she would be able to say what he was incapable of doing.

A sick feeling formed inside of Regina’s already queasy stomach and her concern for the blonde multiplied tenfold.

‘Speak, cat. Or I’m setting your fishy reserves inside of the fridge on fire.’

‘Hey!’ The exceed exclaimed. ‘I’m working up the courage to say it! There’s no need to threaten my fishes!’

A growl escaped Regina, setting Happy back on the correct path.

‘If Emma doesn’t bring the fever down,’ Happy swallowed thickly. ‘She’s going to burn through her magical containers and...’
Regina’s eyes widened in horror, ‘She’ll die.’
Rumplestiltskin had lived for many centuries. So many that he has lost track of what timelines he had been in, where and when he had killed people. That was one of the many reasons he didn’t want to meddle with something as messy as the timeline. Like he once told Victor Frankenstein, it was better if the dead in his past remained exactly where they were.

It was only natural that he was attuned to his surroundings. That he paid attention to every detail around him. If he didn’t each step he took could very well be his last. Rumplestiltskin was many things, but he did love himself dearly despite it all. The sorcerer would miss himself too much if he were to suddenly keel over. However, missing the movement of the various trinkets in his one would either have to be completely idiotic or just plainly beyond help.

Gold stopped in his tracks to examine the strange phenomenon, trying to pick up on whoever could be the source of it.

The news of Emma Swan’s predicament had spread quickly through town. Not only because the folk in it lived for gossip, but because everyone cared for their savior and were concerned for her wellbeing. Hearing that she was ill and that she had no control over her powers filled everyone in a state of utter panic. Everyone seemed to close up shops and remain inside rather than go hiking in the woods to find the blonde sheriff.

‘If you’re trying to hide from me, Miss Swan,’ Gold called out into the shop, a small smile playing at his lips, ‘you’re doing a poor job.’

Now that he knew who exactly was hiding in his Pawnshop, the stench of Emma’s power made him sick to the stomach—not that he would ever admit it. Emma’s magic was not only that of true love; pure light magic, but now it was god-given too.

It took Maleficent, the only benefactor of this gift, centuries to build up enough magic to create a second container for it. As Emma had stated proudly, perhaps not directly, it had only taken her a year.

That meant her power might quite possibly limitless.

Which meant that it filled Gold with worry.

Emma was unpredictable, and if she wanted to she could wipe the floor with him. Dark One or not.

‘I’m not hiding from you,’ hissed Emma, stepping out from behind the counter. ‘I’m hiding from anyone else.’

Had Gold been the lesser man he was before he became the Dark One, he would have taken a step back and gasped in horror at the woman’s complexion. She looked more dragon now than she did human.

Her eyes were slitted, a golden hew surrounding the green. Then, her teeth had somehow sharpened in the process, appearing similar to that of a dragon’s rather than the canines she proudly bore in her human form. As for the patches that littered her skin—red and a cream-grayish in color—they seem to have decided that they wanted to take over her entire body completely.

What stood out most to the sorcerer was that he could tell that this being in front of him was in more pain than a horse with a broken leg. Emma was dying. That much was clear. Her magical containers
were continue to hear and boil.

The moment that they reached their limit.

Well... it was fun while it lasted.

Gold set his cane down in front of him and leaned all of his weight onto it. He gave the woman a sympathetic look, genuinely sorry for the unspeakable pain she must be in.

And not to show it externally, not even a flinch or a groan?

The man now had nothing but respect for the young woman. Perhaps, he could even admit internally that he was afraid of her pure, unadulterated strength that she carried inside of her.

‘So Belle tells me,’ nodded Gold. ‘She was watching your little brother all evening. Quite the intellectual the Charming’s have gotten their hands on. I had to childproof all of the locks in my shop.’

The blonde cracked a small smile, her canines peaking out from behind her dry, chapped lips. ‘I’d like to take credit for that, but I really can’t.’ Emma opened her mouth to say something else, but she winced in pain and collided into the counter as she tried to keep herself upright.

Gold moved forward to help her, but she immediately held up her hand in warning. Not one to act foolishly without all of the information, he hung back and waited for Emma to speak once again.

‘Stay... Stay back,’ she warned, eyes desperate and pleading, ‘I can’t—I can’t control myself.’ Emma pushed herself straighter so that she could stand at eye level with the man. ‘My magic is hurting people; my loved ones. I need your help to control it.’

Taken aback by the statement, the man let out a soft scoff. The corners of his mouth turned upwards in disbelief as he tried to determine if he had heard her correctly, or if his hearing was somehow starting to go.

‘What makes you think that I’m your best option, hmm?’ He hummed with the raise of an eyebrow. ‘Given your infatuation with our mutual friend Regina I would have thought that you would have gone to her for aid?’

Emma pursed her lips and her cheeks flushed with what Gold assumed to be embarrassment, even through her current predicament. She glanced to the floor and tightened her grip on the counter to the point where the shopkeeper feared she would dent the hardwood.

‘You, uh, you know about—you know about that?’ She sounded so shy that Gold found himself understanding why his son had fallen in love with the blonde in he first place.

‘Dearie, there isn’t a lot that I don’t know, but one would need to be quite dense not to see your doe eyes and yearning looks that you direct towards our dear Madame Mayor.’ The man gave her what one could almost consider a soft and reassuring look. ‘You needn’t worry, however. You’re secret is safe with me.’

The dragon nodded her head, ‘Yeah, uh, I did... I did go to Regina, but I didn’t find what I’d been looking for.’ Emma pursed her lips uncomfortably and Gold could see the anger clear in her tensing shoulders. ‘She, um, wasn’t exactly alone, if you know what I mean.’

It wasn’t a secret that Regina often stood in the way of her own happiness. This was a prime example of just that.
Gold couldn’t possibly imagine what it would be like to ever see Belle in the arms of another whilst he was present. Just imagining the thought was painful enough, but actually witnessing it like Emma had must have the previous evening...

Even if he hadn’t wanted to, Gold’s heart, as black as it was, went out to the heartbroken blonde. Not only was she actually dying, but she was going to have to do it with a heavy heart.

‘My condolences, Miss Swan,’ declared the shopkeeper. ‘I couldn’t even begin to imagine what that must have been like.’

Emma shrugged her shoulders, ‘Let’s just say that I suddenly remembered why I had left in the first place, and that when I’m done with this and helping Elsa find Anna, then I’m getting the hell out of here.’

‘Miss Swan, I hate to break this to you, but you’re dying,’ Gold chuckled half-heartedly. ‘There’s nothing I can do for you.’

The savior deflated at that, plagued by the man’s words. Emma’s eyes were pleading now and made the man feel worse than he already felt for her.

‘Is there nothing you can do?’ Tears welled up in Emma’s eyes. ‘Please, Gold. I’m on my knees here.’

The weight of the sorcerer’s hat suddenly sparked what he would call a villainous idea. There were countless of ways for Emma to regain control of her magic—true loves kiss, potions and trinkets, or spells of all kind. However, he needed to fill that hat with an obscene amount of magical energy, and not was the savior one of the most perfect candidates she would fill the hat in an instant.

He tapped his finger on his cane thoughtfully, trying to weigh his options carefully. Coming to a decision, he gave Emma a stern look.

‘There is perhaps a way to help this affliction, but—’

Emma shook her head, ‘Then do it.’

Rumple felt a little baffled at that. Emma Swan wasn’t one to trust easily, let alone someone who manipulated people because it was entertaining.

‘You haven’t heard what I had to say, Miss Swan.’

It wasn’t that he wanted to persuade her out of it. All that he wanted to understand was where this was all coming from, besides the obvious reason for not wanting to die. The sorcerer could always tell when there was more to a story.

Emma hesitated, taking her time on allowing the words to escape her.

‘I—I... hurt Henry,’ she admitted after a moment. Seeing the look on Gold’s face she hastily continued, ‘I—I mean he’s fine now. Happy took him home and... he’s—he’s skilled in healing magic, so he should be fine.’ Emma took a deep breath, ‘But, I got lucky. It could have been much, much worse.’

Nodding, the sorcerer made his way past Emma and then around the counter. He took out a map and spread it out in front of them. The woman maneuvered her way so that she stood across from Gold, keeping herself at a distance as she leaned heavily against the counter.
'This—' Gold held up a piece of paper. On it in ink was scribbles of Elvish, which Emma couldn’t read for the life of her. ‘This is an ancient spell; designed to take away light magic from those who choose to part with it. But the effects would be permanent.’

‘So,’ Emma frowned in concern, ‘I’d... I’d lose my magic? I’d be... Ordinary.’

The man nodded regretfully, ‘Not all. No one can take away the gods' gifts. However, my suspicion is that your light magic is rejecting your dragonic form. If you were to part with it, then this,’ he motioned to her complexion, ‘should no longer be a problem. But you would be able to...’

Gold trailed off, watching as Emma’s hand sizzled on his hardwood. Immediately Emma pulled back her hand, revealing an indentation she left behind.

‘Embrace your son,’ Gold finished, eyeing the marking with a small frown.

‘Do it,’ ordered Emma, eyes wild as she glanced up at the man. There was no longer a hint of hesitation left in her. ‘Even if it meant I’d have to lose all of my magic. I will face whatever judgement the gods would wish to pass upon me.’

‘Well, unfortunately, ”Savior magic” doesn’t go quietly.’ Gold retrieved a pen from his waist coat’s pocket. He drew a circle on a part of the map. ‘We need to minimize the damage, or you’ll take out a block’s radius.’ The man motioned to a mansion on the spot. ‘This should be the safest place; an old, abandoned manor. You meet me here at sundown, and I’ll have everything prepared for you.’

The dragon stared long and hard at the spot the man had pinpointed. Then, her eyes trailed to the mark she had left on the counter with her hand.

‘Then, I’ll see you at sundown, Gold,’ nodded Emma. She turned to leave, but stopped mid-stride. Briefly she glanced back at the sorcerer, her back to him. ‘Thanks for your help. Don’t tell anyone I was here, alright?’

Nodding, the sorcerer held up his hand in promise, ‘You have my word, Miss Swan.’

A stray gale wind forced Gold to close his eyes. The sound of his side door opening and closing filled his ears and when he opened his eyes, Emma was gone. He glanced down to the ”spell” on the counter before lifting it into the air and crumbling it. The paper fell into the trashcan as Gold allowed a mischievous smirk to grace his lips.

*

Morale was a little bit more than low in the Charming loft.

For the past half hour Regina had been upstairs with Henry. Both had been pretending to read Marvel comic books whilst the latter simply avoided talking to his mother at all.

Charming, Mary Margaret and the deputies were seated at the dining table, but all they were had been doing was waiting for the solution to come to them. Everyone of them were out of options, no one having the slightest of clues how to deal with their latest situation.

Elsa had been making ice to last the coming week for Henry’s head injury, wanting to feel useful in at least something.

Happy, on the other hand, had been in the living room preparing a locator potion to help find Emma, but by the looks of things it hadn’t exactly been going particularly according to plan. Especially if the safety mask and scorch marks on the coffee table had anything to say about the situation.
Everyone was either too tired to argue, or they were simply exhausted with hopelessness. Emma was off alone somewhere doing who knows what. They didn’t know what they could do to help her and each second that they wasted was another second that the clock began to tick away for their dear savior.

Each person found themselves running the events of the previous day through their minds, thinking wistfully of ways that they could have somehow prevented this mess from happening. Not only did it worsen the unpleasant mood they were all currently in, but it made them feel simply awful.

The staircase creaked under Regina’s weight as the sorceress made her way down the stairs. Like the Charming’s, she too blamed herself for their predicament. And whilst Henry might not have come outright and said it, she could tell just like with Emma’s leave of absence that her son felt the exact same way.

Rather than listen to her better judgement, Regina had allowed Robin Hood to kiss her. She had allowed herself to be in this particular situation.

It seemed as though despite her best efforts to do good, she was only digging herself deeper into bad life choices.

Barely having the time to collect herself, Mary Margaret rose from her chair and made her way to Regina. Charming and the other deputies rose as well, but they kept their distance. Same as Elsa. Happy on the other hand remained working tirelessly, reaching for different kinds of bottles and small pots.

‘How is he?’

Regina sighed at Mary Margaret as she crossed her arms over her chest, ‘Reading comic books, refusing to talk to me. Oh, let’s not forget he blames me entirely for this ordeal.’

The pixie haired woman reached forward and placed a reassuring hand on Regina’s shoulder, ‘That’s not true—’

‘Isn’t it?’ The sorceress scoffed self-consciously. ‘She came to me, and because I was otherwise preoccupied she ran.’

Mary Margaret gave the woman a sympathetic look, ‘We all have made mistakes yesterday, but it doesn’t mean that the blame rest solely on your shoulders. Or mine, or David’s, or anyone else for that matter. What matters now is that we find Emma and we help her.’

‘Absolutely,’ agreed Elsa, stepping into the conversation as she moved out from behind the counter. ‘The thing that you all must understand is that Emma’s magic is tied to her emotions like mine. The reason she hurt Henry is because she was trying so hard not to hurt him.’ The ice queen frowned as she looked down self-consciously at her hands, toying awkwardly with her nails. ‘It sounds very convoluted when I try to explain it now.’

‘No,’ Regina shook her head. ‘For once you make completely sense, snowflake.’ The sorceress dragged her hands tiredly over her face before glancing in David’s direction. ‘How far is the exceed with his so-called superior locator potion?’

Happy’s disembodied voice echoed through the loft, the sound of jaws snapping mixing together with his panicked words.

‘Back! Back!’ There was several thuds that followed afterwards. ‘Get back into the vile! Bad octopus creature! No one said you could come out!’
Everyone turned in the direction of the living room where Happy’s entire head had disappeared into a small vile, only his legs were visible as they kicked helplessly in the air.

‘Um...’ August frowned slightly as he turned to Regina. ‘I think our residential exceed had hit a few... roadblocks, if you will. We’ll, uh, we’ll call you if you’re, uh, planning to head out.’

Regina nodded with a confused frown clear on her forehead, ‘Yes, I...’ she turned her attention away from the strange sight and tried to focus on the task at hand. ‘I’m going to try and find Emma again. Perhaps go to Gold and ask if he had somehow run into her.’

‘Good idea,’ nodded David. ‘We’ll be here waiting for Happy to—’

‘Agh!’

Everyone winced at the sound of the exceed’s terrified screams.

Elsa frowned in concern, ‘Shouldn’t we help him? He sounds rather distressed.’

Regina scoffed, ‘I say let the little runt be.’ With a wave of her hand, the sorceress disappeared into midair.

As if on cue, Mary Margaret’s cellphone chimed loudly. She rushed towards it to find Emma’s caller ID flashing clearly on the small object.

She answered.

*

The door to the Pawnshop flew open with a ferocious crash. Regina stood on the other side, her expression screaming murder as she had her arm stretched out. The sorceress strode into the shop, the anger radiating off her in waves.

‘Rumplestiltskin!’ She yelled, allowing her fury to be expressed through that one single word.

Somewhat, conveniently, the infuriating imp was always missing when they needed him the most. He wanted everyone to think that he had turned over this new leaf, but Regina knew better. She could always see the gleam in his eyes, the darkness that would forever be tethered to his being. An opportunity like this—Emma’s powers out of control—would no doubt be too good to pass up.

Rumplestiltskin was up to something, and damn it, Regina would bet her Happy Ending on it.

‘Where are you, you little rodent!’ The sorceress spat, marching deeper into the establishment. ‘Why is it that when we need your help you’re never around, or you lock yourself away with that ignorant wife of yours?!’

Pausing, something by the counter caught Regina’s russet eyes. She slowly approached it, shocked to find a handprint about the size of Emma’s indented into the hardwood. She reached forward and began to trace the outline of it, closing her eyes in regret.

It wasn’t about the same size as Emma’s, it was Emma’s handprint.

The frightened blonde had been here in this shop and Gold hadn’t even given them the courtesy of informing them of that fact. It meant that Regina’s suspicions had been confirmed. Gold was up to something, and it now placed Emma into even more danger than she already was.

‘Damn it,’ hissed Regina, stomping her foot stubbornly on the ground.
That’s when her eyes caught onto something else.

A map of Storybrooke.

She pulled the parchment closer and took note of the circle that had been drawn around a manor far outside of town.

‘Oh, Emma,’ Regina brought her hand to her forehead. ‘Please tell me that you have more sense than your parents.’

Hastily, Regina reached for her cellphone. She pulled it from her pocket and began to scan through her contacts. Immediately, she dialed Emma’s number.

Voicemail.

*Gods damn it all to hell.*

‘Emma, it’s Regina,’ the sorceress took a deep breath. ‘You have to listen to me. I’m sorry about what you saw between Robin and I. It will never happen again. You have to... Look, I know, okay? About your feelings for me. It’s why you left. It’s why you turned to Eris. It’s why you ran last night.’

She took a shaky breath and released it in the form of a nervous laugh.

‘I’m so sorry that I’ve been a blind witch, pun intended, but it’s better late than never isn’t it?’

Regina closed her eyes and allowed her feelings to roll over her cheeks.

‘Damn it, Swan. I have feelings for you too.’ She was minutes away from sobbing hysterically, feeling utterly helpless. ‘So, please, just... just don’t do anything stupid.’ Then, against her better judgement, she growled out, ‘Because I will find you, Emma. I will always find you.’

*

Happy loved Mrs. Mom and Mr. Dad. They were warm and kind, and they fed him treats when they thought that Emma wasn’t watching. In fact, Happy loved all of Emma’s family members because they were his family members too.

For the past three years, Emma had been the only thing that the exceed had known. His own parents had abandoned him, and even if Emma offered to help find them Happy had turned her down.

Someone who didn’t want to even know him didn’t deserve to be a part of his life.

So, Happy was open to and welcomed the strange people.

Mrs. Mom enjoyed to cook just like him and even taught him how to make some of Emma’s favorite dishes.

Mr. Dad knew quite a lot of the metal carriage that roared on the roads. Whilst they were impractical and made Emma nauseous, Happy hadn’t mind the man teaching him how to repair one.

Then there was Henry. He was wise in many of ways, such as the Once Upon A Time storybook, comic books and various other things that the exceed had yet to understand.

Despite this love he had for his new and bigger family, he didn’t agree with either Mary Margaret or David’s rationalization that Emma needed to be without her magic. Even if it was just her "savior
“magic”. It was one of the best parts of Emma, and it was somehow a part of Happy too.

The two companions had a lot in common, like their ginormous appetites, but magic was on the very top of their list.

They trained together, they learned new spells together; magic was who they were. It ran through their veins, they needed it like fish needed water—like Happy needed fish.

Getting rid of even a fraction of her magic could have dangerous effects on not only Emma’s system, but if it affected her ability as Hephaestus champion then the consequences could be dire.

Happy knew that she was scared and alone. That Eris had not only poisoned her once again, but that she hated herself for what she allowed herself to do with the goddess. Whilst the feline wished she would rather run to him than away from him, he also knew that Emma wasn’t thinking clearly. Her rash decision to get rid of her light magic was proof of just that.

Emma desperately needed help now and she didn’t even know it.

It had taken Happy roughly an hour before he finally managed to create the small vile needed for the locator spell.Whilst it had been faster than Regina could have done herself, the feline acquired spots on his skin where his fur should have been.

It had taken him and Elsa all of a few seconds to decided that they weren’t going to allow the Charming’s to let Emma make the biggest mistake of her life.

Together they slipped out of the loft without any difficulty along with one of Emma’s old scarves. The thought of having Henry tag along, or even to call Regina had crossed their minds. However, given the boy’s condition, they didn’t want to somehow risk making it worse for their blonde friend. Nor did they want to risk allowing the same to happen with Regina.

‘Remind me again how you came about the knowledge of this...’ Elsa trailed off with a small frown, ‘locator potion.’

They’d been walking after the scarf for a better part of a half hour, but so far it didn’t seem like it wanted to lead them anywhere but through forest, forest and more forest. The sun had begun to set in the horizon, only minutes away from plunging the whole town of Storybrooke into complete and utter darkness.

Happy found himself seated on Elsa’s shoulder, wrapping himself with a small, thick winter’s jacket to keep out the chilly air. He sat with a calculative frown in between his eyebrows as he tried to think back more than a year.

Emma and himself had learned quite a few things on their travels. Spells like no sorcerer or sorceress had ever seen. Incantations that had yet to be invented. Potions that had been long forgotten, leaving it now to Happy and his companion to resurrect them from the dead. It was rather easy to lose track of where and when they had learned specific spells.

‘I think...’ Happy trailed off as he hummed. ‘I think we found it in an old spell book. Somewhere in an underground library in Dunbrogh. A few centuries before any of us were born.’ The feline shivered slight and began to rub his paws together. ‘It’s been a while, so I’m not entirely sure anymore.’

‘And what ingredients had you used?’

She was making small talk now, Happy realized. Though he couldn’t exactly blame her. In fact, he
welcomed the small distraction. Given how sick he was with worry, he needed to think of something else for the time being. Or else he would just drive himself mad.

Elsa must be feeling the exact same way, because it had taken little to no persuasion from Happy’s part to go and look for Emma now. It had even been the queen’s own idea.

‘Will-o-the-wisp tears, uh, bouncing bandersnatch teeth, eye of newt, and, uh, then I sprinkled in a few grams of pixie dust just to give it a really good kick.’

Whilst the ice queen hadn’t the slightest of clues what most of the items on the list was she seemed mildly intrigued.

‘I’ve had to make it a few times now, actually, so I am ninety-nine percent sure what I’m doing,’ Happy nodded with a proud smile.

Raising a curious eyebrow, Elsa briefly glanced into the exceed’s direction, careful not to allow Emma’s scarf out of her sight.

‘Only ninety-nine?’ She turned back towards the red material floating almost aimlessly through the trees. ‘What about the other one percent?’

A beat passed as Happy’s smile immediately fell and he gained a darkly neutral expression, ‘Emma and I promised never to speak of it again.’

Elsa released a soft laugh, lifting her hand to cover the sound. ‘You two have been through the strangest of things.’

The words made Happy sad and... well, happy at the same time. He and Emma had been through the strangest of adventures. What he wanted more than anything was to go through so much more.

They’d been in their fair share of sticky situations, but never before had their been a risk of one losing the other. Together, they had always prevailed. However, Emma had warned him of this realm. That Happy Endings were extremely hard to procure, and even more so to keep them in one’s grasp once one had it.

This all filled Happy with unspeakable uncertainty.

What would he do without Emma?

Who was going to take care of him then?

Shaking the awful thoughts out of his head, Happy clenched his jaw and tightened his grip on the winter jacket. He wasn’t going to let that happen. Emma was family, and you never give up on family. No matter what.

‘And we’re going to go through many more levels of strange things,’ informed Happy, determination clear and firm in his tone. ‘We’re going to find Emma and she is going to be alright.’

Just as Elsa opened her mouth, they stepped into a clearing as the scarf continued on its humble path. Their eyes landed on the largest of manors that they had seen in all of Storybrooke. Light glowed from the inside, shaking the foundations.

‘You’re absolutely right,’ agreed Elsa. ‘Let’s go save Emma.’
Previously On: Chaotic Stupid

Chapter Notes

So, I’m going in for surgery on the 14th for my knee. Getting hurt all the time really is the story of my life, but I have Kingdom of Hearts III and The Witcher III, so life isn’t so bad.

When Emma was little she would get this feeling that drove her at times mad right before she did something that she knew was a terrible idea. Prime examples were shoplifting, pickpocketing, sleeping with Neal; all terrible ideas that led to trouble. Now, standing in one of the mansion’s various rooms. She hated this; the fact that she had to resort to taking away a part that belonged to her and that no one was supposed to be able to take away from her. However, she couldn’t afford harming Henry once again or anyone else for that matter.

It didn’t sit right with Emma to trust Gold the way that she was. She would rather place her fate into Hades’ hands. At least she knew that she stood a chance of making it out alive. Emma would be so lucky to live out the rest of her days as a toad because of Rumplestiltskin. At times she wondered how someone like Neal could ever have been related to the bastard that was his father.

‘Gold?’ Emma called out, flinching when her powers caused the lights above head to flicker. ‘You here? Hell-ooo?’ The dragon pursed her lips, annoyed and agitated by the fact that the feeling of mistrust continued to grow in her stomach.

This whole situation didn’t sit right with her and Emma couldn’t help but think that there had to be another way. A way that didn’t involve the little imp.

‘Gold?’ The blonde called again. ‘Gold, you in here?!’

‘There’s no need to shout, dearie.’ Emma jumped as she turned to face Rumplestiltskin. The man stood several feet away, leaning against his cane as he stared at her with a considering look in his eyes. ‘I’m right here.’

Emma took a step closer towards the man, but a lightbulb burst. Gold seemed unfazed, but Emma jumped in fright as she had not been expecting it. The Dark One took a step back and held up a hand to keep the blonde from attempting to approach once more.

‘You’ll forgive me if I keep my distance,’ requested Gold, his face unreadable as he spoke. ‘It would appear your powers are growing increasingly out of control.’

‘What do I need to do?’ Emma questioned, setting her jaw in determination. ‘How does this spell work?’

Gold pointed his cane in the direction of a wooden door. A golden glow emanated beneath the doorway as well as the cracks. It made Emma wonder what exactly was behind there. Despite how haywire her own magic was, she could sense a great deal of power just beyond the wooden barrier. It felt familiar, though she could not put her finger on the reason why.

‘I’ve already cast the spell inside that room,’ explained the imp. ‘All you have to do is… Step
through the door.’

The man noticed the conflicted look on Emma’s features and he found himself wondering why. She had been so keen on throwing away her abilities and now it looked as though she was trying to think of reasons why she shouldn’t proceed.

‘Is something wrong?’ Gold inquired. ‘You seem... conflicted.’

‘When I was a kid...’ Emma pursed her lips, trailing off as stuff her hands into her leather jacket. ‘I used to—I used to get this feeling that told me when I wasn’t supposed to do something. It was just like my superpower when people would lie, but I wouldn’t listen to it and I’d often get myself into a mess of things.’ The blonde glanced towards the door, frowning at it considerately. ‘I have that feeling now.’

‘No magic is without risk, even magic used to take away magic,’ reasoned Gold, his voice calm and soothing as he lulled her into false security. ‘Look, this is very much your choice. And, of course, it was also your idea.’

Later, Emma would realize that she was being manipulated by Gold and that he too simply tried to use her as a pawn, as someone who mattered little in his game and his plans for the future.

‘What would you do?’ Emma questioned, glancing back towards the man. ‘If you needed to get rid of your magic, if you had the chance to no longer be the Dark One, what would you do?’

Gold paused, mulling over the question. Then, he answered without hesitation, ‘I wouldn’t go in there for anything?’

Frowning, the dragon tilted her head to the side in pure curiosity, ‘Why?’

‘Because, Emma, I’m not like you. I’m a man who makes wrong decisions, selfish decisions,’ elaborated Rumple, sighing at her hindering.

‘But you spent all that time looking for Neal. You sacrificed yourself to save the town. You married Belle.’ Emma listed off his good deeds, trying to understand why he would still be the selfish person that he was.

‘And each time, I meticulously undid all the good,’ sighed Rumple, glancing down in a brief moment of self-pity before he looked back into Emma’s green slitted orbs. ‘Neal is still gone, the town is still in danger, and Belle, for better or worse, she knows who I am, and that’s the man who always chooses power.’

Emma pursed her lips, ‘She believes you can change.’

‘I love her for that. But I fear she’s quite likely wrong.’ Gold cracked a small smile as he directed with his finger towards the blonde. ‘But you, Emma? You don’t need to change. Because you do the right thing. Always.’

The doubt that Emma had felt disappeared in an instant.

Gold was right; she needed to get rid of her magic before she did something that could harm anyone else. At the very least it would place her loved ones out of harms way for the time being, just until she and Happy could leave again.

Emma clenched her jaw, then removed her hands from her pockets. ‘Thanks, Gold.’ The blonde nodded, trying to convey her appreciation in the one simple gesture.
‘Of course,’ nodded the blond man. He offered her a weak smile, the guilt briefly eating away at him before he forced it down and out of his body. ‘We have no choice.’

Gold then walked away; leaving the mansion and Emma behind. He washed his hands in innocence for this is what needed to happen. This was but a small sacrifice to ensure that he could have it all. There need not be anymore bloodshed or loss. Emma would be the last.

*

It was official.

The Charming’s were all absolutely, wholly, completely moronic.

What made it worse was that Regina was in love with one of them and shared a son with them.

Allowing Emma to get rid of her magic like it was an old pair of Jimmy Choo’s was quite possibly the worse idea that the Charming’s could have ever had.

...And they hired the Wicked Witch of the West as their nanny.

The one thing that was set in stone regarding magic was that it was a part of its user. One couldn’t just tear it off like a old, soggy bandage. Consequences of removing ones magic could be dire and most likely result in a fate worse than death.

Rumplestiltskin knew this. He had been the one to taught this little factoid to Regina, and yet he was so willing to aid Emma in making arguably one of the biggest mistakes of her life.

They’d been driving for the better part of ten minutes, Henry and David in the front whilst Regina and Mary Margaret were settled in the back of the cruiser. Silence was spread through the vehicle, the worry for Emma’s wellbeing only growing with each mile marker that they passed.

No one knew what waited for them at the manor, if they were too late or not. However, Regina liked to think that the yellow furball would at least have had the decency to call them if Emma was no longer with them.

At least Regina hoped so.

Mary Margaret scooted over from her seat in the other corner so that she could claim the space directly next to Regina. The former Evil Queen merely rose an eyebrow at the sight, the sound of leather squeaking filling her ears along with the rest of the car. The sorceress could see David glancing in the rearview mirror, but he at least had the sense to focus his attention back onto the road.

‘So, before there wasn’t exactly time,’ whispered Mary Margaret, leaning over towards Regina.

She was particularly careful that the other two occupants in the cruiser hear what she had to say, which made Regina wonder exactly where she was going with this conversation.

Hmm.

It couldn’t be that hard of a fall if she were to open the car door, could it?

‘But, what exactly did Emma walk in on?’

Yip.

Regina definitely considered leaping or outright disappearing out of the vehicle at that moment.
‘Robin... and I...’ Regina sighed heavily, glancing to where Henry was pretending to stare out of the cruiser, watching the trees passing by. ‘We shared a kiss. It was small and it was brief.’

Mary Margaret pursed her lips, but was wise enough to remember Regina’s rather erratic temper. She twiddled her thumbs together and hoped that the sorceress would come clean on her own.

Scowling, Regina made sure to keep her eyes firmly planted on the back of Charming’s seat. The last thing she wanted to do was actually see the satisfaction spreading across her former nemesis face.

‘Fine,’ growled Regina. ‘It was anything but brief or innocent for that matter. And if you must know, I regretted it the moment we broke apart and I... and I saw the—’

‘—devastation in Emma’s eyes,’ finished Mary Margaret, offering Regina a sad smile. ‘Well, it’s better late than never I always say.’

Regina blinked.

The puzzle pieces fell into place.

Slowly, the sorceress turned towards Mary Margaret, eyes wide and filled with mild disbelief.

‘Wait.’ Mary Margaret turned to the woman, eyes confused as though she didn’t understand what Regina had just realized. ‘You knew?’

Still, ever the dull Charming, Mary Margaret frowned in confusion. She eyed Regina much like Emma did when the lightbulb still had to go on somewhere inside of her mind.

It was Karma.

Falling in love with someone who shared genetics with Snow White was purely karma its best and full form.

‘Knew what?’ Mary Margaret questioned, brows still furrowed in an adorable manner.

Regina wanted to be sick.

Leaning forward, the sorceress briefly glanced in Henry’s direction, then lowered her voice, ‘That Emma is in love with me?’

Recognition sparked in the woman’s green orbs, ‘Oh that.’ She smiled fondly and shrugged her shoulders. ‘Well, yes of course I knew. It really is true what they say; a mother always knows.’

The sorceress wanted to scoff. What she had been agonizing over the past two days, here this woman comes and acts as though it was common knowledge not just to herself but to everyone else as well.

‘Well, how long have you known?’

‘Since we all came back from the Enchanted Forest,’ informed Mary Margaret. ‘Emma just seemed so—Oh, how do I put this—so light on her feet, perhaps. Every time you walked into the room she’d get this sparkle in her eyes and this soft smile that she only seemed to reserve for you. I was so entranced.’

‘Yes, well, it seemed as though I missed the memo,’ scoffed Regina, bringing her elbow to rest against the cruiser’s door and her hand to hold up her chin. ‘Now I know what you and your darling of a husband must feel like every day of your lives.’
Mary Margaret scrunched up her nose at the insult, but instead of lashing out like she quite likely was entitled to she merely took a deep breath.

‘Emma’s stubborn and hardheaded, and she says things without thinking twice about a subject. At times she challenges every fibre of my being and I wonder how that child is even related to me.’

Regina rose an amused eyebrow, ‘Well, I see the resemblance quite clearly. A thief and a bandit aren’t that far from one another on the hierarchy. I’m quite certain that their inked right next to one another.’ The sorceress pretended to think on the matter a little longer before tutting, ‘And let’s not forget her nasty habit of meddling with other people’s affairs as though it is some kind of a hobby.’

The pixie haired woman rolled her eyes, ‘My point is that I know what Emma looks like when she’s in love, and she still has that same look on her face whenever she looks at you. Damn, Eris and everything else.’

‘Did the Snow White just use a curse word?’ Regina guffawed, a look of pride shining in her russet eyes.

‘Regina,’ chided Mary Margaret, desperately wanting to keep the woman on the topic that urgently needed to be discussed. Especially before they arrived at this manor.

Sighing, the sorceress relented, once again directing her gaze out the cruisers window. The whole town seemed to be swallowed whole by the night sky. Their only source of light was the moon. It’s light made the forest trees cast ominous shadows over the road, causing shivers to run down lesser men and women’s spines.

‘It doesn’t matter how she looks at me, nor does it matter how I look at her,’ declared the queen with a clipped tone. ‘It’s not going to work out. If you hadn’t noticed, I am more famously known for mucking things up when it comes to relationships than our residential pirate is. And that is saying a lot because he is a man.’

Mary Margaret stared at Regina sympathetically. The sorceress had made many of mistakes, but she wasn’t lying when she said that the one that topped them all was driving Emma so far away that the blonde needed to jump into a magical portal to try and fix herself.

There had been mistakes made, on the sides of both parties involved. However, nothing was unsalvageable. Just look how far Mary Margaret and Regina.

And there had been a lot of murder attempts. Not all of them rested on Regina’s shoulders alone.

‘Look at me and David.’ Mary Margaret directed to herself and then to her blissfully oblivious husband driving the cruiser. ‘We have faced impossible odds, numerous times, often because of you.’

Regina fixed the woman with a look, ‘If this is your way of making me feel better, I’m positively devastated to inform you that it’s not working.’

Despite the interruption, Mary Margaret continued, ‘We’ve always worked out in the end.’ Pausing, the pixie haired woman’s gaze softened. ‘You know why? Because we have hope.’

Eyes flashing with mirth, Regina crossed her arms over her chest and narrowed her eyes. ‘You get a quarter from the Hope Commission every time you say that word, admit it.’

‘I’m serious, Regina,’ insisted Mary Margaret.
‘Well, it’s easy for you to say,’ huffed Regina. ‘You’re a hero. When you need help, it magically shows up. And you know what? That’s what Emma is; a hero. She’s become this beacon, of hope, and I’m just... well, I’m just me. I foolishly toyed with her heart all because I listened to that damned fairy.’

Moving her hand, Mary Margaret placed what she hoped would be a supportive hand on Regina’s wrist. When she wasn’t shoved away, nor given a look that would strangle her where she sat, she smiled.

‘Well, a part of you may love Robin, and that’s okay,’ promised Mary Margaret. ‘Just like a part of Emma will always love some part of Neal despite all the pain and agony that he had caused her. Were he alive she might not necessarily want to be with him, but he had been a big part of her life at some point. Just like Robin had been a part of your life.’

Regina remained quiet at that statement, unable to form any kinds of coherent words.

When did she become so soft, so mellow?

Just a year ago she would have maimed Mary Margaret for even approaching such a deep an meaningful conversation. She was quite certain that the pixie haired woman would have attempted to maim herself for even remotely encouraging Regina to court her daughter.

In fact, Mary Margaret would have asked for the poison apple without external encouragement.

‘As for the hero thing,’ Mary Margaret’s voice drew Regina back from her thoughts, ‘Regina, you saw me grow up. To put it simply, I was a brat.’

A sound close to a snort escaped Regina, giving her clear opinion on how she viewed the matter.

‘I continually seem to make mistakes with Emma, and rarely have any idea how to fix any of the hurt that seems to linger behind her warm green eyes.’ Pausing, she shook her head in amusement, ‘Regina, you have literally held my heart. You know that it’s not untouched by darkness. You are not all evil, and I am not all good. Things are not that simple.’

‘Well, whoever’s guiding all this seems to think it is.’ Regina pulled her wrist away from Mary Margaret, gently and carefully. Not like she once would have. ‘You’re the hero and I’m the villain. Free will be damned.’

‘I think it’s needless to say how Emma would put this, “Screw them”,’ spat the raven haired woman, causing Regina’s eyebrows to fly into her hairline. ‘We make our own fates, we chart our own courses. I’m not good because some person decided that in an old stuffy room by candlelight. I’m a damn strong woman with a mind of my own, and I do what I damn well please. And guess what, Regina. So do you.’

Regina wanted to laugh.

She had never heard Mary Margaret utter a swear word in her entire life and she has counted a total of four.

‘I don’t know whether to hand you the swear jar or a glass of champagne,’ informed Regina, but she couldn’t help the smirk that made its way onto her lips. ‘However, you do have a point.’ Determinedly she stared on ahead. ‘Miss Swan has another thing coming if she thinks that I’ll allow my Happy Ending to slip so easily from my fingers.’
Thank you guys for the nice reviews (at least those of which that count as nice), kudos and bookmarks.

I’m not really going to address the bashing I received the previous chapter, I’m not going to say that I didn’t deserve it. What I will say, however, is that there are two sides to every story. A comment from a Guest and starchasm summarized it so beautifully and put into words exactly how I feel about my story and Regina and Emma’s relationship.

If you feel that I am not representing the characters correctly in the way that you want to see them, I am sorry. If you feel that my work is offending you or that it does not measure up to your ideas, I am sorry. Please, find another fic to read. I’m a very patient woman and I can take a lot of shit, but bashing the hard work I put into this story so that I could get constructive criticism on how to improve my writing and how I can improve my ideas is not only childish, but it’s just downright disrespectful. I can tell the difference between bashing and constructive criticism. So, please, you know who you are, don’t read on if you’re just going to continously try and break me down.

This was a stupid idea.

A very, very, very stupid idea.

The door to take her magic away was right there and the exit in the opposite direction was right over there.

Emma didn’t want to die today, so this was her only option. The only option that would ensure Henry wouldn’t get hurt again or anyone else for that matter. The dragon couldn’t even imagine a possibility where she could end up hurt her baby brother. Then, she wouldn’t be as lucky as she had been with Henry.

She lifted her hands into view, momentarily stopping a few feet from the shaking door. All around her magic swirled in the air, causing the chandelier lights to short circuit and the rest of the manor to shake as power radiated off her and the spell awaiting her inside.

Did she want to get rid of her magic, or keep it and quite possibly risk losing everything?

Emma loved her magic. It was a part of her like an arm or a leg. She was at her happiest when she was training with Happy or soaring above the sky without one single care in the world. That wasn’t just the gift that she’d been given by Hephaestus. That was her light magic as well.

In the corer of Emma’s eye, she caught sight of herself in one of the many mirrors in the large hall.

Her canines and other teeth resembled that of her dragon form. Her eyes were slitted. She was covered in blotches of scales here and there.

To put it quite simply, Emma looked like a monster. She felt like one too.
A freak.

That same orphan girl who didn’t belong.

Clenching her jaw and then creating two solid fists, Emma growled furiously and then looked back to the awaiting door.

This would be for the best, she idiotically told herself, and then she took a stubborn step forward. Emma reached towards the door, ignoring the bile that rose in her throat.

‘Emma, stop!’

Whirling around, the blonde came eye to eye with Elsa, then with her flying feline companion. A look of sheer determination was spread out on their faces as though they were brick walls and Emma was the fool who was about to run directly into them.

‘What are you guys doing here?!’ Emma hissed furiously, eyes flashing as she sneered at her friends. ‘You both need to leave! Now!’

The floor beneath their feet shook with the intensity of Emma’s outburst. The dragon’s balance was phenomenal unlike Elsa who nearly fell over despite her royal background. Happy was happy to help aid the queen, keeping her upright so that she didn’t lose her balance and end up hurting herself.

‘“Family sticks together!”’ Happy shouted over the groans and protest from the room and manor around them. ‘You taught me that, Emma. It’s all I’ve ever known! So, you’ve got another thing coming if you think that I—that we are going to let you do something so stupid!’

Tears had begun to well up in Happy’s large green orbs, streaming over his soft furry cheeks. It caused Emma’s chest to physically ache with sorrow. To know that she was the one causing her friend, her child such pain was simply unbearable.

‘I’m out of control, little buddy!’ Emma shook her head, her own eyes mimicking Happy’s now. The self produced water now clouding her vision. ‘There’s no other way. You two need to leave now or I’m going to do a lot more damage than a bruise or even a cracked rib.’

Stubbornly, Elsa cut her hand through the air. A classic way to completely turn down whatever the other person’s plan, thought or sentence was. In this case it told Emma that neither of them were planning on changing their minds.

‘No. You didn’t give up on me, even when you nearly froze to death in that ice cave.’ Elsa took a deep breath, her own emotions and fears running rampant inside of her. However, she knew that if she were to give into them, then she was not going to help the blonde dragon whatsoever. ‘So I’m not giving up on you now.’

Happy and Elsa shared a look with one another, an understanding of some sort. As though they were entirely in this together and that they would follow where the other would lead.

Emma honestly wasn’t surprised.

Her feline companion seemed to always know exactly what she needed and when she needed it.

‘Look,’ began Happy, fixing Emma with a sad but soft look. ‘I know that you... were with Eris.’

The blonde opened her mouth to interrupt, but Happy wasn’t about to allow her to spiral down that negative rabbit hole once more.
‘But it doesn’t matter,’ promised Happy, going as far as flying a little closer. ‘And it doesn’t matter if she shows up with a baby in nine months, or if you give birth in nine months. What matters is that we are going to love that mini-Emma like she or he was planned right from the start. Because they were. Not by us, but definitely by fate.’

Emma clenched her fists and allowed the tears to spill over her cheeks. She bit down hard on her teeth as she tried to keep herself from sobbing pathetically like a child.

‘And I know how scary it is hurting someone you love,’ Elsa took a step forward of her own, keeping her hands up so that she didn’t appear threatening or demanding in anyway, ‘I’ve lived in fear of that my entire life. But giving up on your magic is not the answer. There is another way.’

A roar tore through Emma’s throat, the dragon stoking the omnipresent fire within her enraged as she was. The creature within her wasn’t satisfied, the injustice it experienced clawing to get out. To do something that Emma would surely regret once she looked past the red induced vision and came to her senses.

Seeing what was coming before it struck, Happy dove in front of Elsa and immediately cast a quick protection spell with a brief movement of his right paw. A green incantation pattern appeared in front of them just as a powerful blast burst forth from Emma’s mouth.

Drops of the flames set fire to some of the wooden furniture around them as well as parts of the floor they stood on. With a quick wave of Happy’s free hand, those were quickly extinguished.

A pained cry echoed from Emma before she dropped onto her knees and then fell forward on her palms. Elsa moved to aid the woman, but Happy kept her back. He knew that if they were to panic and try to help her during this spike in her fever then it would only become worse.

‘I can’t...’ Emma wheezed painfully, ‘Little buddy, Elsa, this—this is all... this is all I have left.’ She looked up into Happy’s own green orbs. ‘I don’t have a choice.’

‘There’s always a choice.’

Surprise was evident on everyone’s faces as they turned to face the newcomer. It seemed that dramatically timed entrances was still Regina Mills's specialty.

She shared a brief look with Happy, arms stretched out cautiously just like his and Elsa had been. The feline gave her a nod of encouragement, imploring her to succeed where they had failed. With that settled on her chest, Regina continued her path deeper into the vast room.

‘—gina?’ Emma stared up at the brunette with wide and shocked eyes. ‘W—What are you doing here?’

Shakily, Emma made her way to her feet. She was trying to place some more distance between herself and the brunette as she steadily approached, but what waited for behind her could debatably be a worse fate than what was in store in front of her.

The dragon shook her head adamantly and held up her hands as though she could keep Regina away with her mind alone.

‘Gina, you shouldn’t be here,’ continued Emma, a plea in her voice. ‘I’m out of control; you guys have to leave. Now.’

Regina stubbornly shook her head as she continued on her path, ‘I’m not going anywhere. I’m here to fix my mistakes.’
At best her voice could be considered that of a whisper barely reaching above the noise echoing and polluting the air around them. One could consider the former Evil Queen a bundle of nerves; a complete and utter mess.

Slowly, Regina continued her approach, mindful of the flames that now leaked out of the savior’s entire being.

‘I hadn’t known how to, but I do now.’

‘What are you talking about, Regina?’ Emma frowned, moving a few steps back. ‘You’re out of your mind. I’m dangerous, I could hurt you.’

‘Well, be that as it may,’ Regina forged on, no wavering or doubt in her voice. ‘I am not afraid of you, because you are not a monster. You are not someone who would intentionally hurt me or Henry, or anyone that you care about because you are good.’

‘You’re not...’ Emma swallowed thickly, staring at Regina as though she was a deer caught in headlights. ‘You’re not afraid of me? That I could hurt you?’

‘Of course not,’ insisted Regina. ‘I could never be afraid of you, Emma. Not ever.’

‘Gina—’

‘No,’ interrupted the sorceress. ‘I need to say this because too much has already been left unsaid. I know why you ran away, why you continue to run away, and... and, Emma, I’m sorry that’s it’s taken me so long to finally come to terms with what is in my heart.’

Emma frowned in confusion, trying to comprehend what Regina was telling her. She knew better than to interrupt the sorceress, so she kept her tongue and waited for her to continue.

Regina licked her lips, now having proceeded much farther than either Happy or Elsa had. She was trying to hide her nervousness like she always did. Perhaps outwardly she was the picture of level-headedness, but Emma could sense the ripples in Regina’s magic. She could never manage it before, but she easily did so now.

‘Robin was a mistake. We missed our chance the moment I didn’t enter that tavern all those years ago. I realize that now and I should not have held onto what I thought we could have.’

The brunette shook her head as emotions gripped her chest. It heaved up and down violently, but yet she refused to cry. If she did, then she was certain that she would never be able to stop.

Regina took a gasped breath, ‘And I wanted my fate to be defined by some pixie dust because it was a safe choice. It was safer than to face what was right in front of me all along, because I have lost so much and I cannot lose you too. And because of my stubbornness, because of my jealousy and anger I let myself fall back into my old habits.’

Emma took a step forward, surprising everyone by her actions. ‘Regina... you’re not that person anymore. You’re not... you’re good too.’

‘No, I hurt you, Emma,’ insisted Regina, tears finally spilling over her dark cheeks as sobs began to rake her frame. ‘What I did... how I behaved... it’s unforgivable. I am unacceptable.’

‘Don’t say that,’ begged the dragon. ‘You’re sensational. You’re breathtaking. You’ve fought so hard to become a better person, Regina. You deserve happiness. You deserve everything that you want.’
‘Do I deserve you?’ Regina questioned, catching Emma off guard. ‘Because from where I’m standing, after what I’ve said and the pain that I put you through... you ran into the arms of a goddess of chaos because I pushed you away.’

‘Regina, I run... It’s who I’ve always been,’ the dragon clarified, clenching her jaw. ‘It’s the only way that I have known to survive for so long, and I know that it shouldn’t be that way. It’s not your fault.’

‘I never meant to hurt you,’ exhaled Regina, continuously allowing the water to flow from her eyes. ‘I’m so sorry.’

‘And I never meant to hurt you,’ responded Emma. ‘So... let’s just... stop. And try to move on? Together?’

Regina could hold the small smile that graced her through the tears. ‘Together.’

In a few short strides, Regina grabbed Emma by her waistcoat’s collar. She released all of the pent up emotions that she has felt over the past few months into that one single kiss as though she was trying to bring herself back to life.

Emma’s hands made their way to Regina’s waist after a moment’s hesitation and began to return the kiss with just as much vigor.

A light sprung forth from their intimate interaction, spreading out through the entire manor. The floor ceased its shaking. Everything else immediately silenced as well as though peace and quiet were needed for them to pay respects to this rare occurrence of true love.

Happy excitedly pumped his fist into the air, releasing a whoop before he turned around and placed a large smack of his own on Elsa’s cheek. The queen immediately returned his affection by drawing him in for a close embrace.

Regina abruptly pulled away from the kiss, much to Emma’s annoyance, to witness her scales disappearing from view and Emma’s eyes returning to their regular appearance. The brunette’s hands moved to cup Emma’s cheeks as a look of awe spread over her face. The blonde smiled down at the woman, excitement fluttering in her chest as she stared into the most beautiful pair of russet eyes she has ever laid eyes on.

‘Emma...’ Regina trailed off, tracing her thumbs over the blonde’s cheeks.

‘You did it,’ informed Emma.

A mischievous smile graced Regina’s lips as she leaned closer, their noses grazing against one another. ‘I do believe that we both had a hand in this.’ Then, a serious yet gentle look passed over the sorceress’s face. ‘It seems as though we have a lot to talk about, Emma.’

The chuckle that erupted from Emma’s chest was like music to the brunette’s ears, and the look of excitement and mirth in Emma’s eyes directed towards Regina made her heart swell with pride and love.

Emma reached up and tucked a stray hair behind Regina’s ear, reveling in the way that the woman seemed to lean into her touch.

‘I think that you might be right,’ agreed Emma, eyes darting down to pink, luscious lips.

With little hesitation, Emma connected their lips once more, far less desperate than before. Now she
took her time to memorize the tastes and smells that mixed together to form Regina’s unique scent.

‘Emma!’ Happy’s excited shrill broke them apart regretfully, barreling towards them with a great speed.

The dragon had just enough time to step away from Regina before she was tackled onto the ground by the small feline. A laugh bubbled from Emma’s stomach as she held onto Happy.

No matter what age, Happy always seemed oblivious towards proper etiquette and social cues. Perhaps she was to blame for that, but she wouldn’t want him any other way. His unique outlook on the world was something she couldn’t live without.

‘Hey, little buddy,’ Emma couldn’t help but grin broadly as she hugged the ball of fur closer to her chest. ‘I’m okay.’

The feline drew back, tears ever present in his eyes, but a smile that could quite possibly blind anyone who gazed at it directly.

‘You scared me,’ informed the yellow fur-ball, sniffling loudly. Then, he scowled, delivering a hard smack on her forehead.

‘Ow!’

‘What were you thinking?!’ Happy growled angrily. ‘You gave me a heart attack, you idiot!’

A sigh escaped the blonde, trying desperately not to pout at the sound of Elsa’s giggles and Regina’s own form of amusement.

In all honesty, she deserved a little more than just a smack to her head, but she wasn’t that much of an idiot to admit it out loud.

Slowly, Emma rose to her feet, releasing Happy so that he could continue flying on his own. She offered the exceed a sheepish smile as she rubbed the back of her neck.

‘I’m sorry, Happy,’ apologized Emma. ‘I...’ she frowned slightly and dropped her hand to her side. ‘I have no excuse. Sometimes I forget that I have people who care about me, who want to help me. I shouldn’t have pulled away.’

The dragon locked eyes with Regina, a blush settling over her cheeks as if she just realized what they had done a moment earlier. The sorceress merely smiled, reminding Emma that it she hadn’t somehow hit her head and fantasized any of this.

Emma turned towards Elsa, who now still kept her distance to provide the two companions some form of intimacy. In a few short steps, the dragon pulled her friend into a tight embrace.

Happy slowly floated closer to Regina. The brave soul went as far as landing on the woman’s shoulder and taking a seat.

Normally, Regina wouldn’t allow the little creature to even think that she found him remotely likable, but she made an exception for the moment. Especially when she felt as at peace as she currently did.

Crossing his arms, Happy declared with a cheeky smile, ‘You llIike her.’

She didn’t scowl, nor did she grant the creature the satisfaction of a cleverly worded insult. Instead, with a way of her hand, Happy’s tongue disappeared. A smirk graced Regina’s lips as the feline
reached frantically for his face, placing his paws over his mouth.

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Mary Margaret, David and Henry were waiting outside just as they exited the manor. Regina’s hand was clasped tightly into Emma’s smiling broadly as they made their way down the small pathway. Happy and Elsa were both following close by allowing the two women a small amount of space.

Henry was the first to notice his mother’s, his eyes briefly darting to their intertwined hands, but merely filed the information away for later questioning.

‘Ma!’

His mop of brown hair was all Emma managed to see before he barreled directly into her. The dragon easily stood her ground as she caught the boy and lifted him off the ground. She didn’t even strain against his weight as she squeezed him tightly.

Her parents rushed over to her side next, concern radiating in their eyes and what one could always recognize as hope.

‘Did you—’ Mary Margaret began to ask only for Emma to shake her head as she set her son down.

‘I didn’t,’ exhaled Emma in relief. She glanced towards her friends and Regina, giving them another thankful look. ‘They, uh, they stopped me.’

Now wasn’t the time nor the place to discuss what had just happened between herself and Regina. They both knew what it was, and that was good enough for now. There were bigger issues at hand, so their relationship status was definitely going to have to be put on hold.

Her mother’s smile widened before she stepped up to Emma. The dragon allowed the woman to embrace her, the feeling of belonging and love enveloping her instantly.

‘I’m so, so glad,’ whispered Mary Margaret, the words edging away at the sadness that Emma had felt over the past two days. ‘Just please don’t change.’

Excitement bristled to life in Emma’s stomach, stoking the fire in her stomach. Warmth radiated off her as she nodded her head.

‘I don’t want to,’ she promised.

As Emma pulled away, her father reached out and ruffled her blonde locks affectionately. She swatted playfully at the man, but missed purposefully. They shared a soft laugh, their eyes glistening together.

‘We love you no matter what, kiddo,’ informed David, giving her a soft yet meaningful look. ‘I mean it, Em.’

Offering a toothy smile, Emma shrugged nonchalantly. Even when the words meant the world to her, ‘I know.’ She paused, hesitating briefly. ‘It’s just that... well, I think that there are some stuff we need to talk about. A lot of stuff I think that you guys definitely will need to hear regarding... everything.’

David and Mary Margaret shared a look, then both nodded their heads, ‘We’re willing to listen, Em.’ David nodded. ‘To anything that you have to say and we’ll...’ The man trailed off, trying to find the right words.
‘We’ll try and be better,’ interjected Mary Margaret. ‘We know that... well, we’ve never been parents of the year, but we want to fix it. We want to help fix... want to help fix whatever you think is broken.’

Emma smiled, nodding her head. It wasn’t perfect, but it was a start.

The dragon felt Henry reattaching himself to her side, oblivious as Mary Margaret made her way towards Regina.

‘You okay, kid?’ Emma questioned with a raise of her brow. She tilted his head to the side to inspect for his injury. She was pleasantly surprised to find that there was no trace of her mistake anywhere on her son’s skin. ‘You’re mom healed it?’

‘Yeah,’ he grinned, ‘I’m just glad you’re okay.’

Behind them, Mary Margaret bumped her shoulder against Regina’s, careful not to make any eye contact. She offered half a smile as she tried with difficulty to contain it entirely.

‘Did you follow my advice?’ The pixie haired woman inquired.

The sorceress rolled her eyes, but with a wave of her hand a quarter appeared in her hand. She held it out towards Mary Margaret and she accepted it with a confused expression. Only when Regina stepped away did realization dawn on the woman.

Regina stepped up next to Emma hand Henry, catching the tail end of Henry’s question.

‘—control of it again?’

The dragon smirked proudly as she lit a fireball in her palm. She hauled it back and then tossed it upwards. Fireworks went off from the small flame, lighting up their night sky.

‘Absolutely,’ informed Emma cockily.

Henry smiled at the beautiful sight, his own pride blooming in his chest, ‘Cool.’

Emma and Regina shared a look with one another, a light blush coating each of their cheeks. Boldly, Emma reached down to intertwine her fingers with Regina as she threw an arm around Henry’s shoulders.

Together the family watched the beautiful display. It had been two extremely ling days and whilst everyone was tired and emotionally exhausted they could rest easy for the night. Especially now that Emma was safely amongst them once more.

There were still many concerns, especially with Eris quite likely roaming about, but Emma felt as though she could say that everything would work—

Her sensitive ears twitched as they heard something above the sound of the fireworks. Immediately her head darted around, her attention no longer focused on the display in the air. She squinted her eyes as they landed in a weaved basket a few feet from the trail that led up to the house.

Emma’s hand slipped from Regina’s and she withdrew her arm from around Henry’s shoulders. Slowly, she began to walk away from her family and friends, moving down the steps of the manor.

Behind her, she heard Regina calling her name in confusion. She sounded concerned and her eyes burned intensely into her backside, but Emma’s attention was solely focused on the matter at hand.
The dragon’s heart was beating violently in her chest, her lungs expanding painfully against her ribcage. The fireworks had quietened now and the sound that had previously penetrated her sensitive ears wailed once more.

Her feet crunched on the gravel road, her eyes wide as the basket neared. She stopped a foot’s distance from the item, bile already sitting heavily on her throat. Inside the basket there lay a black blanket that continued to move as whatever was underneath squirmed and screeched their small lungs out.

Emma swallowed thickly as she bent down and pulled the soft material to the side. There, inside in a soft cotton mattress lay a crying baby girl as bare as the day she was born. Hair as black as the night and eyes a soft purple violet.

Once she spotted Emma, her crying immediately ceased with a loud gasp. The two stared at one another for a brief moment before the baby made a sound that conveniently resembled that of the word "Mama". She reached out towards the dragon, opening and closing her hands almost desperately as she cooed.

Taking a deep breath, Emma lifted the baby from the basket. She made certain to wrap the small creature in the black blanket, keeping her close to her chest in order to keep out the cool night air. She turned around to face her family and friends, eyes wide and filled with what she suspected to be uncertainty.

The dragon looked up at Regina, who’s eyes resembled the turmoil in her own.
So, last night our cat was brutally murdered by our own f**king dogs and I am dying on the inside, so this chapter is dedicated to her.

I noticed a comment about moderation and another about just switching off guest commenting all together. I’m not gonna be an ass and make other people suffer just because one person is a douche. Also, you guys don’t have to feel like your stepping on eggshells when it comes to commenting. I’m a big girl and it’s all cool.

**Storybrooke, Eris’s Lair—Recent Past**

Rumplestiltskin’s annoyance was bristling beneath the surface as he stood inside Eris’s icy lair. In his hand he held Emma’s cellphone, glaring at the object as though its very existence mocked him. Closing his hand swiftly he crushed the item, effectively destroying any evidence that Hook could have left for her on the message he had sent to warn the savior and allowing the pieces to fall to the icy floor.

Behind him, Eris’s shadow leaked from all the dark corners and began to form her in the middle of the vast area. A playful smirk appeared on her luscious lips as she approached the Dark One with a sashay in her hips.

Today, she had gotten exactly what she wanted.

Not only was the most powerful child of Chaos born, but she had created the turmoil amongst her love’s family like she had wanted. She was satisfied and, more importantly, she was more pleased than she had been in quite some time.

The goddess stepped up behind Gold, her long fingers wrapping around his shoulders. The man tensed in her touch, but didn’t move away.

‘You look disappointed,’ she whispered in his ear. ‘How marvelously entertaining.’

‘Miss Swan did not behave as I had hoped,’ grumbled the man, narrowing his eyes as he glanced back at the goddess.

In the blink on and eye she slipped over his shoulder with her shadow and pressed herself against him once she regained her full form.

‘That’s because you didn’t take her true love into account.’ Eris licked her lips suggestively as she leaned forward. ‘Whilst I would have loved to make the Queen’s blood boil had I interfered for the sake of my love, gods and goddesses aren’t supposed to meddle with mortal affairs.’

Rumplestiltskin rose an amused eyebrow and released a short laugh, ‘And what do you call this which you have been doing?’

The goddess took a step back and shrugged her shoulders, ‘I call it... *entertainment*. Being immortal becomes dull after a few thousand years, wouldn’t you say?’
Gold glanced away in disinterest, ‘I’m not *that* old, dearie.’

Eris merely smiled in amusement as she turned away from the imp and began to waltz the length of the ice cairn. The Dark One watched her every move, wanting to be prepared for anything that the goddess of chaos would likely want to throw at him for the sake of *fun*. One could even go as far as saying that he was nervous in the immortal being’s presence.

‘What is your plan now?’ The blond questioned, clenching his jaw as he drummed his fingers on his cane. ‘It was my understanding that after you and the savior had a child, then you would be on your merry way?’

The goddess swirled around, her eyes flashing with excitement, ‘Oh, I am, as you say, *on my merry way*. However, what kind of guest would I be if I didn’t present the residents of this town a parting gift, hmm?’

Gold glanced sideways to the magic mirror, eyes widening slightly.

‘You wouldn’t dare,’ he challenged.

Red orbs flashed dangerously, ‘Oh, but I *do* dare.’ Eris turned towards the mirror and stared at both her and Rumple’s reflections. ‘This is going to be so much fun.’

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**Storybrooke, Clocktower—Present**

Emma glared long and hard at the light gray clouds with floating mirror shards as it crawled across the sky on the horizon. She and the others stood high up in the clocktower to assess the situation they were currently in.

In her arms, her and Eris’s baby slept quietly in the blanket that the woman had left her in the basket with. The small demigod seemed to be at peace with the dragon, their magic stimulating one another in a strange way.

Eris was many things, but above it all she was a goddess. It didn’t surprise Emma that the woman had just left their child in the snow like that, no care whatsoever.

What would have happened had Emma not heard their child’s cries?

Now, for one last parting gift she had went ahead and cast the *Spell of Shattered Sights*. Whilst Emma had never before witnessed the magic herself, she had read enough ancient tomes and cast off legends to know the damage that it could do. Not to mention, it was created from the darkest of magic that existed.

Clenching her jaw, Emma glanced down at the sleeping newborn in her arms. She didn’t have just her family and friends to protect, but now she had this child as well. It was making her second guess every plan in her head, mostly because if something were to happen to her the little one would have no parents left. And she’d be damned if she allowed this child to grow up even remotely as she had.

‘Belle was right,’ Elsa declared, biting the inside of her cheek. Her voice drew Emma from her thoughts and refocused her attention on the discussion at hand. ‘Eris is actually doing this.’

David pursed his lips as the others turned to face one another. He briefly glanced down at the bundle in Emma’s arms, then pressed forward, ‘We open the mines and the vaults, we take shelter there.’

Happy shook his head from where he sat one Henry’s head, his brows furrowed in concentration, ‘This is dark magic in one of its purest forms. It doesn’t care about ceilings.’
‘As much as I hate to admit it,’ Regina grumbled crossing her arms over her chest, ‘The cat is correct.’

Had there been time, the exceed would have happily exploited the opportunity. Now, however, lives were at stake and Happy was rather fond of his own opportunity to walk the earth. Not to mention, he would rather not be influenced by a spell that with make him see the worst in his loved ones.

The feline shared a brief glance with Emma, allowing the dragon to continue.

‘We have until sundown, at best.’ She tsked in annoyance, scowling, ‘And I really could have used a nap before the next crisis hit.’

Regina rolled her eyes, ‘Can we focus on the problem at hand?’ The way she glanced down at the baby in Emma’s arms did not go unnoticed by the dragon or Happy. ‘By sundown, everyone in this town will start tearing each other apart.’

The dragon nodded, then sighed, ‘Which is kind of a problem. The obvious solution would be to make sure that we’re not in town, but then we have a whole other problem.’

Elsa rose and eyebrow, ‘Which is exactly?’

‘Eris is the Goddess of Chaos, which means that her plans are usually full proof otherwise she would rarely have any entertainment.’ Happy released a huff and then motioned to the newborn, ‘Hence why we have mini-Emma.’

‘Please don’t remind me.’ Regina pinched the bridge of her nose. ‘Do you have a point, or are you merely running your mouth to annoy me, pet?’

Happy narrowed his eyes at the brunette, but simply chose not to react on the sorceress’s words, ‘My point is that she reconstructed the ice wall that Elsa had taken down a few weeks ago. Emma and I sensed a large amount of magical energy spike in the direction of the town line just before Eris casted the Spell of Shattered Sight and she told me to check it out. We’re not going anywhere now.’

‘Well, what about your magic?’ Mary Margaret turned to Emma with a hopeful look in her eyes. ‘You learned world-crossing magic, yes? I remember you mentioning it the other night.’

Emma pursed her lips regretfully, ‘And if I could I would.’ With one hand she reached to the back of her neck whilst the other held steady onto the infant in her arm. ‘However, I blew an insane amount of energy because of the Dragon Fever. It’s a miracle I haven’t passed out yet. After the first time I had it, I literally slept an entire week afterwards. Not to mention the amount of energy I blew on...’

A blush crept up Emma’s neck as she locked eyes with Regina. At the same time the two women immediately looked away from one another as the sorceress’ own cheeks painted a healthy color of red.

The dragon cleared her voice and tried to cover her own awkwardness with a small cough into her hand, ‘And, uh, Eris would have taken other precautions to ensure that we can’t open any portals. She usually does.’

‘So, getting through the ice wall is our only option?’ David inquired, dragging a hand over his face before he placed his hands on his hips.

‘No,’ Emma shook her head adamantly. ‘Magic here is unpredictable, ancient magic even more so. Especially when it derives from someone as powerful as Eris. I’d be able to take the wall down, but my containers need to fill for when I absolutely have to use my magic. If we want to cross the line,
then we’re going to have to find a way over the wall.’

‘I could take people over,’ volunteered Happy, sprouting his wings and flying off Henry’s head. ‘You can count on me, Emma.’

Emma nodded her head towards the exceed, clenching her jaw in determination, ‘Then what are we waiting for?’

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The wall towered in front of them all, several feet above the trees. Its shadow loomed over them, mocking them that their doom was inevitable and inescapable. Like the rolling storm clouds that rumbled in the distance it was laughing at their unfortunate fate.

Happy wanted to do what he could to provided Emma with all the help that he could. To him, it was obvious that the weight of the world was now resting on her shoulders. He could also see clearly the way that it tore her up inside when she had to leave mini-Emma with Granny like Mrs. Mom had done with Neal. He could tell that she wanted to at least catch a breath to come to terms with the fact that she was no longer just a mother to Henry, but to her a newborn babygirl as well.

So, volunteering to fly up the wall and see if he could get other’s over was all he could do now to at least take some of the burden from his companion.

Around Happy, the Charming’s, Elsa, Regina and Henry all stood gathered behind him as they waited patiently for the exceed to prepare himself for the flight upwards.

Emma was having a brief, but quiet discussion with her parents, glancing from the to Regina and Henry now and then, who stood huddled together.

Happy was too focused on the task at hand, trying to motivate himself somehow. It wasn’t that he was nervous because of the height, but he was well aware that Eris could have left another surprise for them on the town line.

He wasn’t certain which way to go was worse; spontaneous combustion or being torn apart by his new family members. Happy supposed that it would be the same either way if Regina got her hands on him during the spell.

‘You got this, little buddy?’

The feline snapped his head away from the vast wall before him and looked up at Emma’s concerned gaze. He offered her a stern nod and floated up to her height.

The nervousness still bubbled in his stomach, much like butterflies. Only these butterflies were eating one another as though cannibalism was quite normal.

‘I’ll go first, just to make sure that your crazy ex didn’t place some other kind of protection spell on the town line.’ Happy offered a small, teasing smirk. He wanted to at least lighten the mood a small amount seeing that everyone was so serious. ‘I won’t be long.’

‘Just be careful,’ ordered Emma. ‘I kind of like having you around.’

A giggle bubbled from the yellow feline’s throat, ‘I kind of like having me around too. Don’t be such a worry wizard. I’ll be fine.’

If Emma’s eyes could they would have popped clean out of her skull and begin to make their way
down the road with the force that she rolled them.

‘Just like you were fine with having me trim your whiskers for a spell,’ countered the dragon, crossing her arms over her chest.

Happy scowled and pointed an accusing paw towards her, ‘You didn’t do it right, and because of you my head hung to one side for two weeks!’

‘You moved your face, smart-ass,’ Emma scoffed. ‘Now get up there before I kick you there myself.’

Just as the exceed began his ascension, Regina stepped closer to take her place next to Emma. She glanced nervously sideways at the dragon, crossing her own arms over her chest in an uncomfortable manner.

Knowing it was neither the time nor the place to broach any form of an important topic, the sorceress settled on keeping her eyes firmly planted on Happy’s backside.

The farther the exceed flew, the smaller he became and the closer he came to the very top of the only thing standing between them and what could quite possibly be survival.

‘If Happy doesn’t make it over the wall, I do have a plan to get Henry and the kidlet to safety,’ declared Emma determinedly.

Regina’s head snapped to the blonde, who now stared at her in determination whilst keeping Happy in the corner of her eye.

‘You think that Eris would actually want to endanger the child she craved to gain from...’

Jealousy simmered through her seams. The brunette swallowed thickly, a lump having suddenly formed in her throat. She glanced down awkwardly, unable to meet Emma’s intense green orbs.

The dragon sighed and wrapped her hand around Regina’s forearm, careful not to hurt her or make her feel uncomfortable. The gesture did its work and Emma found herself staring into the russet eyes that she would always adore.

‘The situation is less than ideal,’ huffed Emma, biting the inside of her cheek in annoyance. ‘But it’s here now and it’s going to be messy. Eris knows that I’ll do what it takes to protect this kid. She’s not worried about that.’

Regina nodded her head and took a deep breath.

This wasn’t the time to allow her jealousy to get the better of her. Especially if it’s her own fault that they’re in this mess in the first place. If only she had removed her head from her ass then perhaps she wouldn’t be feeling the way that she was feeling at that moment.

‘This plan of yours, what would it entail exactly?’ Regina found herself asking, not liking the way that the guilt danced in Emma’s eyes.

‘A pocket dimension,’ answered Emma firmly. ‘I open a portal to another realm, one that Eris can’t access nor keep me out of. It’s where I store various odds and ends I found on my travels—the items that I don’t keep in my backpack that is. It only has room for four life forms. At the time that I created it, I had Happy, Mulan and Ruby in mind.’

Regina’s brows knotted together, unsure what Emma was still hiding from her. More specifically,
where she was going with this information.

‘There’s more,’ Regina pointed out as her nose crinkled in displeasure. ‘What aren’t you telling me?’

Emma drew her bottom lip between her teeth as she chose to contemplate her words carefully before she spoke them aloud. Especially given how past events turned out where her mouth was faster than her brain could keep up with.

‘I want you to take Henry, Neal and the kidlet, and stay there until I somehow fix this mess,’ insisted Emma, with a slight wince.

The sorceress’s pupils flared as she guffawed at the savior, not quite believing the words that had just come out of Emma’s mouth.

There had been multiple occasions in the past where Regina had been made speechless in the past by the woman standing in front of her, but she was certain that this moment surely took the whole cake and stuffed it down its throat.

‘You want—hm—You want me to sit on the sidelines whilst you run off to play hero?’ Regina scoffed and immediately tore her arm from Emma’s touch.

It took all of the sorceress’s strength not to slap her supposed true love right across the cheek, or simply ram her fist into Emma’s nose for good measure.

‘Of all the insulting, bore-headed—’

‘No!’ Emma grabbed Regina by her shoulders to stop her mid-rant. ‘That’s not what I mean—gods, woman. This isn’t about playing hero. We need to keep the kids safe, and I’ll be damned if I let anything happen to you. This is my mess. I’m the one who was idiotic enough to get involved with a crazy goddess.’

Regina lifted her hands up and broke Emma’s hold on her, she then grabbed onto the blonde’s wrists and gave her a dirty look.

‘If you think that I’m going to just leave you to foolishly get yourself killed,’ hissed Regina, her hands tightening on Emma’s wrists, ‘then you are even denser than I previously assumed.’

The sorceress drew in a breath and then slightly loosened her grip on Emma. Now, slightly calmer than before, Regina traced her thumbs over Emma’s soft skin to soothe herself that the woman wasn’t simply just going to disappear again. Not after everything that they had been through.

Emma’s green orbs softened, ‘Regi—’

‘No,’ the brunette shook her head, her lower lip quivering subtly.

The brief sign of her emotional mindset would have been missed by anyone else, but given how well Emma knew the woman and her keen eyesight she easily spotted it without even having to pay specifically attention to the tell.

‘No,’ insisted Regina, her mouth curving into a small smile. ‘You’re not stuffing me into some portal because your afraid. My skillset is better served here than with the children. If Happy doesn’t get over the wall, then you will send him with them.’

Regina scrutinized the blonde with her eyes, looking for any obvious sign that Emma would disobey her wishes.
‘Are we in agreement?’

Emma wrinkled her nose, but then nodded, ‘Yeah, but I’m not happy about it.’

The sorceress’s mouth twitched in amusement, ‘You needn’t be pleased, but I do expect you to have a little faith.’

A grunt escaped the dragon, but before she could give her verbal response Happy’s yell filtered down to the ground. Immediately, Emma looked up to where her companion had flown into the air. In her years of traveling, Emma had seen quite a few amusing things. However, nothing could compare to the sight of Happy being electrocuted several feet in the air, entertaining with a mid-flight dance routine. The amusement was, however, short-lived as the feline tumbled down to the earth, the wall somehow growing thicker and taller because of their interventions.

Despite the rumbling of the floor and the fact that everyone else were taking a step further away from the shaking icy structure, Emma broke into a sprint as she kept her eyes planted on the falling exceed.

With all the strength she still possessed, Emma leapt onto the side of the wall, a good ten-feet off the ground, and then pushed herself away from it. Effortlessly she caught Happy mid-decent and came crashing down to the tar road with a painful grunt. The road cracked underneath her weight, giving way for her impenetrable form.

The others came rushing to her side as Emma sat up, not a even a scrape on her pale features. The dragon opened her arms to reveal Happy’s small frame. Incoherent mumbling spilled from the exceed’s lips, confirming that he was still very much alive.

Emma blew out a relieved breath and then rose to her feet with the barely conscious feline in her grasp. ‘Looks like Eris is a—’ she covered Happy’s ears and then gave Henry a look that told him to do the same, ‘raging bitch as always. No surprise there.’

‘What are we going to do now?’ Henry questioned worriedly, removing his hands from his ears. ‘We have another plan, right?’

Regina opened her mouth to speak, only to be cut off by Emma.

Whilst they had gathered to check on Happy and the dragon herself, Elsa’s attention had been diverted to the crack that had formed in the ice. She had broken off from the group and made her way towards it as though it had called out to her.

‘Elsa, no,’ Emma called out, handing her exceed over to Henry. ‘Stop. That thing could go off again.’ She moved close enough to the blonde and managed to grab her by her arm, pulling her to safety.

The queen turned around with a familiar item in her grasp, a large smile spreading across her pale features. In her hands she held the same necklace that Happy had happened to drop several weeks ago when they had been trapped in the ice cave.

‘It’s Anna’s necklace,’ informed Elsa, her blue eyes darting up to meet Emma’s green. ‘I thought that it was gone. It’s like a miracle.’

Emma pulled her lips into a fine line as she stared up at the large wall. ‘I don’t think so. Eris likes to play games and this might be a part of that.’

‘Regardless,’ Elsa glanced back down at the necklace, ‘It’s a sign.’ She smiled broadly at Emma,
giving her a reassuring look. ‘A sign that we’re going to win.’

Regina scoffed and crossed her arms over her chest. ‘Is everyone into this hope thing now?’

Mary Margaret shot the woman a cheeky smile, only to receive an eye roll in return.

‘If we’re going to win, we need to stop wasting time,’ growled Emma, moving closer to the group along with Elsa. She turned to her parents, addressing them,

‘Mom, Dad, meet up with Killian and August, then tell everyone what’s going on. When this goes down, everyone needs to be separated from their loved ones if they don’t wanna hurt each other.’

The dragon took a breath, quickly compartmentalizing her thoughts before she continued.

‘Dad, tell Killian and August to head to the waterfront. We need to see if we can’t get a few people out.’ A tick mark appeared on her forehead. ‘Eris has most likely taken every precaution, but we have to try something or we’re all pretty screwed.’

David and Mary Margaret broke off from the group, eager and ready to get started with their given tasks.

Emma turned towards Regina, concern radiating in her eyes as she stared at the woman and their son.

‘I have to warn Robin Hood,’ declared Regina, her face contorting in a wince as she noticed a muscle jumping in Emma’s jaw. ‘His camp’s not far from here.’

Turning to Elsa and Henry, Emma offered them a brief smile. Henry, bless his soul, seemed to catch on to what his mother wanted and took a step back, pulling Elsa with him. At first the blonde frowned in confusion, but merely relented when she watched Emma turn back to Regina.

The dragon blew out a breath and threw a few stray curls out of her face, ‘Take the kid and Happy with you. Elsa and I will head over to Belle, see if she or Gold has any ideas for us, because I’m frankly running on empty here.’

Regina opened her mouth, then closed it again. She spared a glance at their son, only to find him and Elsa with their backs directed to them. The sorceress swallowed thickly and glanced down uncomfortably at her feet.

‘We still...’ She cleared her voice awkwardly. ‘You, uh, we kissed.’ Regina looked up with nervous eyes. ‘And, if you may or may not have noticed, we shared true love’s kiss.’

Emma’s eyes softened and a small smile spread across her face. ‘I had noticed. And, yes,’ she nodded, ‘I suppose we did, in fact, kiss.’

‘Should we...’ Regina trailed off and crossed her arms over her chest, needing a barrier between herself and Emma to at least take away some of the vulnerability that she felt. ‘There’s a... There’s a discussion I think that we should have... if you wanted to have one. Now might not be the time or the place, but...’

The dragon stepped forward, into Regina’s personal space and boldly cupped the woman’s soft cheek, ‘Regina, we kissed, with tongue. And a lot of it. And I plan to do it again; get used to it. End of discussion.’

Tears welled up in Regina’s eyes and she sniffled, ‘Okay.’
The sorceress wanted to scold herself for being so emotional, but she couldn’t find it in herself to care. Especially when Emma looked at her like that, eyes devoid of anger or sadness.

Regina tilted her head upwards, meeting Emma halfway. Their lips pressed together, softly embracing one another and mixing together as they the pairs were made for each other. Regina inhaled Emma’s burning ember scent and Emma inhaled Regina’s soft lilac perfume, memorizing each other for the second time in the span of a few hours.

When they pulled apart, albeit a little regretfully, Emma pressed her forehead against Regina’s as she tried to remind herself that this wouldn’t be the last time that they would see each other.

‘Like I said earlier, I know that things are messy,’ Emma opened her eyes to stare into Regina’s own emotional and teary ones, ‘even more so now that there’s a small, violet-eyed, raven haired demigod involved in all of this, and well... I’m still a little upset about what happened with Robin Hood...’

‘Understandable,’ nodded Regina, eyes softening. ‘As am I not particularly happy about what transpired between you and Eris, but I... well, I never meant to hurt you. I truly am sorry, Emma.’

‘Me too,’ the blonde nodded, the ache in her chest still not disappearing, but it was at least quelled for the moment. It made her confident that she might even receive happiness somewhere in this mess. ‘I’ll figure it out.’

The sorceress shook her head gently, careful not to cause too much friction between her and Emma’s foreheads. Her hands sailed from their place around Emma’s neck to grip her leather jacket’s collar.

‘We’ll figure it out,’ corrected the brunette. ‘We’re a team; quite a fine one at that.’

Emma grinned, ‘Yes, ma’am.’

She pulled away from the woman, turning her head to her friends and son. Happy had at least regained semi-consciousness, even if he seemed a tad bit out of it still.

‘Happy,’ declared Emma, her tone serious and firm.

The exceed leapt to attention from where he had been seated on Henry’s shoulder. He easily slipped back onto the ground and saluted his companion.

‘Aye, sir!’

‘Go with Regina and Henry, keep ’em safe,’ she ordered. ‘You call me the minute something happens. I’ll be along shortly with the kidlet and Neal.’

Happy nodded his head, ‘You can count on me, Em.’

Thunder crashed in the distance and lightning flashed in the storm clouds as they continued to grow in size. Everyone’s gazes turned towards the imminent spell heading their way.

Emma clenched her fists and her jaw along with them. ‘I have bigger fish to fry.’
Belle didn’t know what Emma wanted her to pull out of her books like some kind of magic rabbit trick when they couldn’t find anything in the past two months that they had been looking into Eris's history. What was the possibility that they could find a solution now if they hadn’t already.

Since they had first learned about the Spell of Shattered Sights Belle had quickly dug up its origin that first night. About an old Nordic king whose daughter had died and wanted his kingdom to join in on his suffering.

Emma had then explained how Eris had been the one to teach this old and heartbroken man the secret of the dark arts. She had helped him perfect the spell. Thus far though, that was all that they knew of this spell. That and how it affected the victims.

Since the spell had now been casted, she had been going through book after book, after book with the gale glasses that Emma had gifted to her. However, she knew nothing more than what she had known the day before, which was already too little to even begin with.

The door’s bell to the shop jingled loudly, causing Belle’s head to shoot up from the book she’d been buried in. Emma and Elsa came waltzing in, both with hopeful expression on their faces as they neared the counter.

‘Any luck?’ Emma questioned, stopping directly in front of the counter and leaning against it.

The dragon’s muscles tensed, her tank top leaving little to the imagination of how toned Emma truly was. Belle would have blushed had she not been used to her friend’s unabashed way of flaunting her body. What made it worse before that Emma hadn’t ever seemed to even notice what she was doing.

Elsa, who still wasn’t used to this, Belle noticed, flushed and quickly darted her eyes to an object that she held in her hands.

The bibliophile didn’t blame her.

Not when a particularly recent reformed Evil Queen had claimed the bubbly dragon as her own, even if she herself had been shelving the blonde away for a later time.

"Hello, Belle. I hadn’t gone and gotten myself killed. It’s good to see you and I hope that I hadn’t worried you too much."’ The redhead held her hand out towards Emma, signaling that it was the blonde’s cue. ‘Now... you try it.’

Emma bit the inside of her cheek, at least having the decency to look guilty. She blew out a breath and straightened herself.

‘I’m sorry, you’re right.’ The dragon gave her an apologetic look. ‘I scared everyone by pulling a
Elsa frowned in confusion and turned towards Emma, ‘A what?’

The dragon waved her off, ‘Cultural reference lessons and braiding of hair later. Let’s save the town first.’

Belle nodded her head in agreement, ‘Well, the spell appears to be as unstoppable as you’ve said.’

Nodding, Emma crossed her arms over her chest and encouraged the redhead to continue on.

‘The one thing I did find is there may be a way to undo the effects on anyone it touches.’

It had taken her precisely an hour and a half to come across this information; a true rabbit out of a hat. She was surprised that she hadn’t come across it before, but she chalked it off as the haste she and Emma had been in to find a solution to their goddess problem. It seemed all for nought given that the dragon had ended up with a newborn anyways.

‘That's wonderful,’ declared Elsa, her eyes lighting up in joy and relief.

‘It seems that when somebody's been touched by the spell, that you can use them to undo it,’ continued Belle, motioning with her hands as she spoke. ‘With a strand of their hair, you can make some kind of counterspell, like a vaccine.’

‘Gods,’ muttered Emma, dragging both of her hands over her face. ‘Nothing can ever be easy, can it? It’s not like we’ve got thousands of people here in Storybrooke who had met Eris and/or been affected by this spell.’

The dragon leaned forward to grip the counter, glaring hard at edges as she tried to rake her mind for any form of an idea.

‘We’re screwed.’

‘Not necessarily,’ informed Elsa, holding Anna’s necklace out. ‘What about my sister?’

Emma shared a curious look with Belle, then rose an eyebrow in her friend’s direction as she turned towards her.

‘What do you mean?’ The dragon questioned, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘You think that when Eris kidnapped her, she—I don’t know—somehow got affected by this spell somewhere along the line?’

‘Exactly.’ Elsa nodded her head, glad that Emma was catching on to what she had implied.

She held the necklace out to Belle. The redhead accepted the item, eyeing it with mild confusion.

‘You said that if I had something of hers, then you could use this locator spell to find her.’ The blonde smiled excited and directed with her hand to the necklace. ‘Well, now I have something of hers.’

Grinning, Emma placed a hand on her friend’s shoulder and gave an affectionate squeeze.

‘Point Elsa,’ praised the dragon, then addressed Belle. ‘Do you think that you could work your magic prove Elsa’s not-so-far-fetched theory?’

The bibliophile moved towards a microscope of a sort. She placed the necklace underneath the scope
and eyed the item intently. It was a moment before she finally back glanced up at the two blondes.

‘There’s mirror dust in this,’ she informed in awe. ‘Actually embedded in the metal.’

Emma shook her head and blew out a breath, ‘Happy’d be giving me hell for allowing you to keep raking up the tallies.’ Ceasing her musings, she frowned as she came to a realization, ‘Hold on. Why would Eris have used the spell on Anna? What would she have gained from turning her against you.’

Elsa shrugged her shoulders, clearly knowing as much about the subject as Emma did.

‘I don’t know,’ sighed Elsa, face contorting with uncertainty. ‘It could explain how I ended up in that urn. Perhaps...’ the queen trailed off as she but her lip nervously.

Glancing up, Elsa eyes Emma as though a thought had crossed her mind. One that she didn’t want to voice allowed incase it could quite possibly hurt her friend’s feelings in the process.

Isolating herself for most of her youth might have been for the safety of others around her, but it did her no favors when it came to social interactions or cues that didn’t involve royal etiquette. She had barely even known how to hold a normal conversation with a person hadn’t it been for Emma and Happy.

‘What?’ Emma frowned, confusion clear in her eyes. ‘Don’t hold back the crazy ideas now. Eris is the goddess of crazy, so we need to put our heads together on this one, Els.’

‘Well,’ Elsa glanced over to Belle uncertainly, not finding the encouragement she needed to continue, but only a curious and confused look that mirrored Emma’s own. ‘I think that we need to take into account that Eris had planned all of this... so that she could get to you.’

If Emma had been surprised or angered by the news, she didn’t show any of her usual tells. In fact, she looked as though she had expected it to be a possibility.

Instead of acknowledging that which Elsa had suggested, she simply turned towards Belle and plucked the necklace right from the woman’s grasp.

‘Belle, round up the fairies and have them set up shop in Granny’s so that they can figure out how to make this counterspell.’ She then turned back to Elsa, ‘Let’s go and find your sister.’

Emma moved to take a step towards the door, not even bothering to wait for even a response from either of the women. However, the dragon stopped mid-stride when her eyes caught onto something that quite frankly caught her off guard.

Turning back around, she ignored Belle and Elsa’s concerned eyes and took a few short strides back over to the counter. Effortlessly she leapt over it and stepped directly into her friend’s personal space.

Belle’s eyes widened, along with Elsa’s, but she barely even got the question “Emma, what are you doing?” out of her mouth before Emma grabbed onto Belle’s shirt and pulled it slightly to the side to reveal her friend’s right shoulder.

A scowl formed on Emma’s face as a gasp escaped Elsa’s lips, her hand shooting up to cover her mouth.

There, on Belle’s beautiful tanned skin, was a dark bruise that clearly didn’t belong there.

Immediately, the bibliophile glanced away in shame, unable to meet Emma or Elsa’s eyes for even another second. Especially not when they both now knew what she had been keeping from everyone
‘He hurt you?’ The blonde questioned, eyes flashing dangerously as she snarled. Emma’s canines shone in the dim lighting, clarifying that she wasn’t to be mistaken for a human.

Her voice was quiet, her eyes welling up with tears, ‘I let him. He’s always had a... temper.’

Belle wouldn’t lie. She wasn’t ashamed. It was just how Rumple was.

‘Oh, Belle...’ Elsa’s voice was filled with remorse, her hand moving so that she could place her hand over her chest. ‘Why haven’t you told anyone?’

The redhead met Elsa’s eyes, then Emma’s. She shrugged her shoulders, suddenly finding herself uncertain. She didn’t truly understand herself. Perhaps it was because her only friend had taken off briefly after her wedding and she only recently became friends with Emma.

There were a number of factors that Belle could go on listing for an eternity.

Excuses on Rumple’s behalf were by the dozen, but she knew that it was all they were. Excuses.

The redhead had read thousands and thousands of books on this subject. She could list every tell or sign that there ever was and how one could tell, one could always tell when something was wrong within a relationship.

And was she honestly really in any danger?

Was she honestly being wronged when she possessed Rumple’s dagger and could tell him to stop what he was doing at any time?

‘It doesn’t matter,’ growled Emma. ‘I’ll call Mom and tell her to round up the fairies for us. You’re coming with us and you’re not leaving my sight. Especially not to go anywhere with him.’

Belle released a breath, and then opened her mouth to speak. However, Emma didn’t seem to want to listen to anything that she had to say. Especially now in their time of crisis.

‘It’s not up for discussion,’ declared Emma, leaving no room for argument.

With a wave of Emma’s hand, a small vile with light blue liquid appeared in the palm of her hand. She popped the cork and then poured it all onto Anna’s necklace. It’s gem began to glow, floating off her hand and into the air.

‘Let’s go and find Anna. I’ll deal with your husband when we’re not all on the brink of tearing one another apart.’

*

Happy was proud to say that he and Emma had lived in a civilized manner despite the many nights that they had spent sleeping in the woods. Compared to the Merry Men, he and Emma could be considered the same nobles that they raided from time to time just for the fun of seeing just how skilled in combat these posh creatures were.

Often, after a brief raid on a caravan, Emma would express in great detail that stealing was wrong and how taking something that didn’t belong to you shouldn’t be done. Afterwards, they’d distribute the riches in a tavern and they would go onto the next quest.

Sometimes, the exceed had wondered where Emma’s intelligence came from whenever she was
teaching him lessons like that. Then, he met David.

Robin Hood’s camp was buzzing with life as most of the men scattered around to prepare for the spell that was about to strike Storybrooke. Regina had made it clear that war would break out and the men would tear one another apart given the weapons that they possessed at the camp.

Henry had walked off with Will to help Roland and his friends, the children of the Merry Men, break camp along with the rest of the adults.

Regina and Robin were seemingly involved in a serious conversation, no doubt regarding the extent of the spell.

It wasn’t that Happy hated Robin or that he didn’t trust Regina, but both of them had caused his companion pain. He’d been tasked to keep an eye on both Regina and Henry, and that was definitely what he would do. However, that now involved keeping a close eye on Robin as well. Regina could protect herself and Henry just fine, but her inhibitions seemed to be dimmed whenever she found herself around forest boy.

So, the exceed found himself standing idly, watching them with narrowed eyes and wishing that he was rather at Emma’s side than having been sent to "babysit".

**Hey, little buddy. You there?**

Happy frowned at the question, wondering why Emma would call out telepathically to him. Her orders had been clear earlier and it was still a few hours before the spell would strike. Unless something happened, of course.

_Yeah. I hear you loud and clear, Em._

The exceed turned his gaze towards Henry, watching his companion’s son bending down and addressing several children. Then, he turned his gaze back towards Regina.

_All is well here on my end_, reassured Happy, wanting her to rather focus her attention to where it should be rather than checking in on them if that happened to be the case now. _What about you?_

_I’ll fill you in later_, Emma practically growled. Not because she was upset or impatient with him, Happy realized, but because the exceed must have missed out on quite a lot. _I’m afraid that we have a situation on our hands on top of this steaming pile of manure that Eris has dropped us in._

Immediately Happy’s features steeled, and he uncrossed his arms. The exceed sprouted his wings and flew up into the air as he prepared to carry out his next order.

_What do you want me to do?_

_Elsa, Belle and I are on our way to the library. We’re about to go looking for Anna, but I want to know exactly where Gold is. Something’s happened, but I can feel my "spidey senses" tingling. He was far too eager to help me get rid of my powers, and I only noticed it now._

_So, I want you to fill Regina in on this, and then I need you to find ol’ mister ’stilskin. However, you can’t be seen, or else I can’t help you. You’ll be on your own for this one, little buddy._

As always, Happy didn’t question Emma’s motives, nor did he hesitate, _You can count on me, Em._ His eye caught Henry again, however, and worry churned in his small stomach. _What about when the spell strikes? Are we still sending the kids to the pocket dimension?_
You’re a magical creature, so you’d be immune. Same goes for me. So, I’m sending Belle with them. Emma seemed to pause as though she tried to filter what exactly to tell him. I have my reasons.

Which I don’t question, reassured Happy with a determined nod to himself. I’ll call out to you if I find anything suspicious. You just focus on Operation Olaf.

Jeez, you sound like Henry.

Happy flew closer to Regina and Robin. Upon spotting the exceed, the latter immediately took a step back from Regina.

It almost made the exceed puff out his chest with pride.

He wanted to say, That’s right. My best friend will kick your ass for even thinking of her girl. And don’t think for a second that I won’t do the same.

Instead Happy reminded himself that one: Regina wouldn’t be particularly entertained by his words, and two: Emma wasn’t a patient woman. She’d be expecting word back from almost immediately.

Regina turned her attention towards Happy and opened her mouth to no doubt either insult him or tell him politely to make himself useful. However, he didn’t give her the chance to do either of those options.

‘Something funny’s going on with Mr. Gold,’ informed Happy, giving Regina a look that told her he wasn’t messing around. ‘Emma told me to go and investigate, but she wanted me to fill you in.’

A scowl appeared on Regina’s face as she turned fully towards Happy, crossing her arms over her chest.

‘What the hell is Rumple up to now?’ The sorceress hissed. ‘Isn’t he supposed to be helping us figure out a way to put a stop to all of this?’

Happy nodded his head in agreement. Then, he shrugged his shoulders, ‘Emma didn’t tell me much, but her gut feelings are never off. When she says something’s fishy, then something is fishy. I’ll probably be gone a while, so will you and the kid be okay without me?’

From somewhere in the small camp, they could hear Henry’s disembodied shout, ‘I’m older than you!’

Ignoring her son’s grievances, Regina rolled her eyes at Happy’s question.

‘Will I and my son be alright without a yellow fur-ball who is more trouble than he’s worth?’ The sorceress’s lip twitched upwards and then leaned slightly forward. ‘I think that we’ll manage just fine.’

‘Besides,’ added Robin. ‘I’ll be by her side.’

Happy stared at Robin, his face kept neutral and devoid of the anger that boiled in his stomach. He then looked towards Regina, noticing the way that the sorceress at least nervously tucked a stray hair behind her ear.

The feline’s brain said, That’s what I’m worried about, but his mouth moved to formed the words: ‘I might be small, and look defenseless, but Emma personally trained me.’ Happy tilted his nose into
the air with pride. ‘If Eris wanted to hurt you or Henry, I wouldn’t hesitate to die fighting to keep the two of you safe. It’s what Emma would expect from me and I wouldn’t aim for anything lower than exactly that.’

Regina’s eyes softened and her arms dropped to her side. She took a step forward and reached up to stroke Happy’s ear gently.

‘Thank you, Happy,’ she nodded with a brief smile. ‘I appreciate that, and we’ll be fine. You don’t have to worry about us.’

Satisfied, Happy bobbed his head. ‘Emma will call you incase plans change, but so far everything is going according to plan.’

With one last glance in Robin’s direction, Happy took off as though hell itself was on his tail.

*

Before them, the only thing between Elsa and Anna, was what one would call an obstacle. Or better yet, a cave-in.

Emma rested her hand on the boulders, palm completely flat as she glared at their latest problem. It seemed as though kept on piling up one after the other. At this rate, the blonde was never going to just be allowed to pass out.

Taking a step backwards, Emma held her middle and forefinger out, drawing a circle in the air. A portal began to appear right against the cave in, following the blonde’s hand until it was fully connected from one point to the other.

It led out onto a sandy beach, the ocean blue stretching out as far as the eye could see. The dragon glanced back to her two companions then back at the scene before her with a weary gaze.

The necklace, now clasped tightly in Elsa’s hand had settled down there the moment that they had entered the vast tunnels, its glow the only thing that now directed them in the direction of Elsa’s lost sister.

‘Let’s go,’ declared Emma, stepping through onto the shores. ‘The more time we spend searching for Anna, the less time we’ll have to actually create this counterspell.’

Elsa and Belle followed after the dragon with hesitant looks, the glow of the necklace only illuminating that much further.

Once they were out of the tunnels and into the fresh and open air, the portal closed behind them. Collapsing down onto the shore, Emma huffed out an exhausted breath. In an instant her friends were by her side, trying to determine what had happened.

‘Emma?’ Belle placed a hand on her forehead, trying to determine if she had any form of a fever. ‘Are you alright?’

The dragon nodded, eyes drooping. ‘No, I’m good,’ she promised, tiredly pushing the redhead’s hands away. ‘I just need a minute. Magic containers... running a little low.’

‘Well, shouldn’t you eat something? Some fire perhaps?’ Elsa questioned worriedly. ‘Maybe Happy could make you that special dish that you enjoy?’

Forcing herself to her feet, Emma shook her head adamantly. There wasn’t any time, not with
everything that was going on. Especially seeing how they probably had two crisis on their hands. She couldn’t afford to take a break now when there was work to be done.

‘No, we have to find Anna, and then we have to get back to town,’ insisted Emma. ‘I don’t like leaving them all defenseless for so long whilst Eris could simply do as she pleases to cause me even more pain.’ Taking a step forward, Emma took a staggering breath. ‘Let’s not forget that I have a newborn who may or may not need to be fed soon.’

Frowning, Emma considered, *What do you even feed a magical demigod baby, who could quite possibly be half-dragon and half-human as well?*

*How did that even work?*

Elsa glanced uncertainly between the necklace and her friend. She was torn between aiding Emma to prepare her for a battle that was yet to come, and carrying on with the search for her sister. Unable to do anything but as the dragon wished, Elsa turned back towards the ocean as confusion began to color her features.

‘I—I don’t understand,’ Elsa spoke her thoughts a loud. ‘She should be here.’

Belle stepped next to the blonde and then held her palm out, ‘Let me see the necklace. Magic is not always the most reliable thing there is.’

Emma huffed, crossing her arms over her chest. ‘Yeah, tell me about it.’

The dragon stared out over the ocean. The necklace had led them there, but there was no sign of this missing sister for miles. Emma couldn’t even sense with her magic any trace of someone that could quite possibly be related to her blonde friend.

‘It’s a wishing star,’ declared Belle suddenly, eyes lighting up in amazement at the item in her grasp.

Emma immediately turned her gaze back to the redhead, raising her eyebrow. Elsa on the other hand took a step closer to Belle, gently taking hold of the woman’s hand in order to inspect her sibling’s treasure.

‘Oh, I’ve read about these. They’re said to grant one’s hearts desires by merely wishing for them,’ Belle glanced up at the other two women. ‘It’s said it could only grant one wish though.’

‘Well, one wish is all we need,’ Emma chuckled excitedly. The blonde placed a hand on Elsa’s shoulder and squeezed it encouragingly. ‘What are you waiting for? An invitation?’

Hesitantly, Elsa took the necklace from Belle once more.

‘Not necessarily,’ she breathed out a heavy breath. ‘I suppose that I could be waiting for the right words to grace me.’

‘Well, ask them to grace you a little quicker.’ Emma patted Elsa’s shoulder and then pulled away. ‘Sundown. Imminent doom. Those words ring any bells?’

Taking another deep breath, Elsa brought the star closer to her chest and then closed her eyes. ‘Anna, I know that you’re out there somewhere. I haven’t given up hope. I wish—I wish that you are here with me now.’

Elsa brought the necklace down for inspection as the jewel in the star glowed brightly and then immediately died down. The three women glanced around for a sign, waiting patiently for something
A moment passed before a portal began to open a few feet from the sandy shores. The fissure that suddenly opened sent out a blast of magical energy. Elsa and Belle both flew back with a painful thud whilst Emma simply stood her ground, the wave having rolled off her like a gentle breeze.

From this portal floated a large trunk before it began to sink back down into the shallow water. Without having to even consider her options, Emma hurriedly threw off her jacket and dropped it onto the sand. She then reached for her boots, easily tearing them off within a matter of moments.

‘What was that?’ Belle questioned, eyes wide as she and Elsa began to help each other to their feet. ‘I thought you wished for your sister?’

‘That,’ declared Emma, ‘is her sister.’

Emma took off with a speed that could rival a cheetah’s. She ran right into the water until it reached her ankles. Then she dove below the surface, disappearing into the clear blue waters.
Hello again, dearies.

So, I noticed a couple of comments that I want to address.

There was a question whether or not I’ll include Maleficent and Lily, and yes that will be happening in the second installment. I think there’s a lot of potential there and both those characters weren’t done the justice they deserved, so I’m thinking of making them a part of the main cast.

Another question was whether or not I’m going to make Emma the dark swan. I’m still contemplating it, and nothing is yet set in stone whilst I work on the second installment. Let me know what you guys think on this point, because whilst I do have a fun idea in mind I am wondering what your thoughts are.

Lastly, I’m also still contemplating what the baby’s name should be. The Kassandra suggestion is in the back of my mind, but let me know what your guys’ suggestions are in the comments.

So, I’m going in for the operation tomorrow. I’m going to be high as hell on morphine or something and I’m going to be in pain, so I don’t really know when I’ll be able to update again or work on the chapters. But I do think I’ll be able to do so sometime next week.

They were alive. That was all that Anna was concerned about. Not the fact that her clothes were soaked to her bones, nor the fact that sand always seemed to get in everywhere, and neither was she that much concerned with the stranger that had pulled both her and Kristoff from the watery depths of doom.

She was thankful of course, but she was more concerned with inhaling oxygen into her lungs rather than salt water that left a bitter aftertaste in her mouth.

The next course of action, of course, was to clung onto their savior like a howler monkey chanting her gratitude over and over. Kristoff had already been dropped onto the sand as though he was a sack of potatoes, but Anna on the other hand wasn’t about to be released until she knew that it was absolutely safe.

‘Anna?’

At that, the ginger’s head darted up from the crook of the blonde hero’s neck. She still had quite the grip on the now grumpy woman, but she would recognize that voice in a crowd of thousands of people.

There, over the shoulder of their heroine, in her full regal form stood Elsa.

It felt so surreal, seeing her sister after the thirty years that had past since the last time she had seen her. After learning that Elsa had been trapped in that urn for so long, she had been worried that her
age would be affected somehow.

‘Anna!’

In an instant, Anna scrambled off Emma and onto the sandy shore, tears welling up in her blue orbs.

‘Elsa!’

‘Anna!’

The ginger barreled into Elsa in an instant throwing her arms around her siblings neck. The blonde didn’t seem to mind her sudden show of affection because she hugged her back just as tightly as she did her.

They spoke over one another, their high pitched squeals of delight causing Emma’s ears to ache with their intensity and she briefly wondered what frequency could quite possibly rupture an eardrum or an organ just as important.

Watching the reunion between the two siblings, Emma hoped to the gods that she and Neal would be so close one day. That they would depend on one another as these two depended on each other. Emma yearned for such a relationship. She would always yearn for a family even if she now possessed more than she knew what to do with.

Catching up with her surroundings, Anna pulled away from her sister as her eyes landed on a familiar face. A smile lit up her face despite the shyness that seemed to grace Belle’s features.

‘Belle!’ Anna exclaimed. ‘You’re okay!’

‘Anna... Anna I’m so sorry for what happened. I—’

The ginger waved her off, still reeling from the revelation that she had her sister with her once again, ‘No, I understand.’ Anna shrugged her shoulders. ‘You were put in an impossible position, and well, Eris didn’t make it any easier, and I’m not even sure what I would have done myself, so—’

‘Can we all catch up with each other later?’ Emma questioned impatiently, interrupting both women from their ramblings.

She reached down and helped Kristoff to his feet, the man having been in a struggle to find his land-legs. He offered Emma a grateful smile as he shook and quivered, crossing his arms over his chest in an effort to try and generate some form of warmth.

‘There’s still the issue of that pesky spell heading this way,’ reminded Emma, approaching the rest of the women with Kristoff by her side. ‘I’d rather not have to send my children, baby brother and Belle dimension hopping. I’m also close to running on empty. At this pace, I can barely even spell spell.’

Kristof and Anna shared a confused look with one another, and the latter found herself thankful that she wasn’t the only one who was as uninformed as she was in their current situation.

‘Um.’ Kristoff tilted his head to the side and began to slam on his ear so that he could get some of the water out. He then proceeded to do the other side. ‘I’m afraid that we both seem to be lost on what is going on. We almost drowned, and I saw my life flash before my eyes—which is unsurprisingly filled with a lot of ice and rock troll traditions that I still don’t understand—so you will have to go slow and explain in great detail.’

‘We’ll explain on the way,’ reassured Belle, worry lines appearing on her forehead. ‘Right now
though, we have to get Anna to the fairies. She might be our only chance to stop this spell before things truly become ugly.'

Anna didn’t know what she was currently about to get herself in, but if she was the only one that could apparently help save an entire town, then she wasn’t about to say no.

The princess nodded her head towards them and then gave Elsa a meaningful look.

‘Lead the way.’

* 

Happy had come to the conclusion of two very important facts:

_One._ Eris was adamant in killing them all.

_Two._ Rumplestiltskin was adamant in killing them all.

Many of times, over the thousands of centuries that Happy and Emma had jumped there had been a few consistent tales.

The one that came to mind now was the _Sorcerer’s hat._ A powerful tool that had been crafted thousands of years ago by a Sorcerer for one purpose. To steal magical power and had been guarded for all those years by his apprentice.

Now, Emma and Happy knew this sorcerer, as he went by the name of Merlin. It had been thousands of years since the last time they had seen him. Or, well, a few months ago for them, but semantics.

The point was that they both knew what this powerful hat was capable of. Happy had had a first row seat to witnessing it consume a _Chernabog_; an ancient demon that feeds on evil, seeking out the heart with the greatest potential for darkness and devours it. Needless to say such a creature wasn’t something to play with. Emma had three distinctive claw marks that adorned her back in an askew manner to testify to that fact.

What made this all so much worse—_so, so much worse_—was the fact that Rumplestiltskin had just absorbed Mother Superior and several of her fellow fairies within.

Happy wasn’t always the brightest creature in the room—next to Emma, of course—but he knew that if that hat had the power to consume one of the darkest creatures from the pits of _Tartarus_, then it didn’t take a genius to hypothesize what Rumplestiltskin wanted to do with it and apparently Hook’s heart.

_Oh. Yeah._

_Hook was here too._

Happy made a face when he came to the realization that he would actually have to save the dirty pirate from death today. The same fowl stench of a man who had come onto Emma at least ten times in the past few months.

Against Happy’s gut instinct to take action and come out a hero this day, he made sure to slip away from _Granny’s_ unseen. Whilst he himself was braver than most people placed together, he knew that Emma had specific instructions that this mission was recon only. The risk of being captured—which was unlikely in Happy’s mind—was just too great. After all he was the only one who now knew that
Mr. Gold was nothing but a dirty double-crosser.

*Emma,* he called out as soon as he placed enough distance between himself and one of the latest threats.

*Yeah, little buddy?* Came the answer. *We’re on our way to the diner. We have Anna and we’ll be able to stop the spell.*

*Yeah, that’s great and all, but we’ve got another problem.*

*Gods. What now?*

*The alleged* town leaders all stood together in the library along with Belle, Elsa and the two newcomers. Their doom was now inevitable and things were looking a little bleak.

Happy sat on one of the chairs that surrounded one of the reading tables. In his arms slept the same small baby girl that had been brought into the world less than a day ago. She was sleeping soundly in her soft blanket that seemed to be one of the many magical items that Eris had collected over the years. It was as if the light around it was being sucked into it completely.

The little one proved to be quite the distraction for Emma at the time, causing her to second guess every plan that she formulated in her mind.

‘So, Gold is a backstabbing traitor.’ Regina declared, crossing her arms over her chest. She threw up one hand in the air and glanced around at the other people. ‘Why is this such a surprise?’

‘Because we all thought that he truly had changed,’ interjected Belle, a sigh escaping her as she shook her head. ‘He had us all fooled. Including me.’

‘I hate to break it to you, Miss-Bibliophile,’ Regina turned towards Belle, glowering at the redhead, ‘but it is not that hard to pull one over you. And if I may add, *Stockholm Syndrome,*’ she lifted her hands up innocently, ‘that’s all I am saying.’

‘Mom,’ Henry scolded, shooting Regina a disapproving look.

Regina pinched the bridge of her nose when she noticed that Emma was giving her the exact same look.

‘I’m sorry,’ she apologized. ‘When I’m angsty I need someone to insult otherwise I get constipated.’

Subtly, Anna leaned closer to Elsa, interlacing her arm with her older sister’s, ‘The brunette scares me a little. Is she always like this?’

Elsa nodded briefly, a nervous look gracing her features. ‘Just try not to stare too long at Emma whilst in her presence. Whilst jealousy does suit the woman, one can not say the same for her victims. Regina already has her heart set on Eris.’

Kristoff, who had been listening in on the conversation, frowned in confusion, ‘Why?’

The queen turned slightly to where Happy was rocking Emma’s newborn. Elsa winced slightly as she informed, ‘That is Emma and Eris’s lovechild.’

Anna grimaced, ‘Ooh, that sounds complicated.’
Nodding, Elsa turned back to the group, ‘I’d rather not get into it right now. It would require a few hours to explain it all as well as a pen and paper.’

‘I hate to be the one that asks this,’ Mary Margaret began, trying to soothe a squirming Neal in her arms. He had begun to grow restless due to the tension in the room, and Mary Margaret was certain that he was picking up on his parents’ emotions as well. ‘But what is the plan now? We have a dark spell that is about to turn us against our loved ones as well as the Dark One on the loose with a hat that could cleave himself of the dagger, which would make him uncontrollable.’

‘Needless to say,’ Regina blew out a breath. ‘We’re all screwed.’

‘No, we’re not,’ declared Emma.

Everyone’s gazes turned towards the dragon, surprise evident on their faces. Emma, however, seemed unfazed by their reactions.

‘I have a plan, but we first have to get Belle and the kids to the pocket dimension I’d mentioned earlier.’

‘Wait,’ Belle frowned in confusion. ‘You’re—you’re expecting me to run away because of Rumple?’ The redhead scoffed, ‘You cannot be serious.’

Regina shook her head, backing Emma up, ‘If you hadn’t noticed, we don’t have the time to be joking.’ The sorceress turned towards the blonde. ‘This dimension of yours, will it be safe?’

‘Absolutely,’ nodded Emma. ‘Not to mention myself and Happy are the only two who know how to navigate it. It’s a death trap for anyone else. Which is why I’ll provide Belle with a map.’ The dragon turned back towards the others, ‘We have the upper hand here. Gold doesn’t know that we’re onto him. He thinks he’s a few steps ahead of us.’

‘I still don’t understand why I have to go with to this pocket dimension.’ The bibliophile’s frown deepened even more. ‘I can help stop Rumple.’

‘No, you can’t,’ insisted Emma, setting her jaw in determination. ‘My plan involves you being as far away from Gold as you can get. Which would mean that you have to go portal jumping. I can’t send Happy with the kids because he’s going to be the distraction.’

‘Yeah!’ Happy added enthusiastically. A moment passed before he realized what his companion had just said. ‘Wait, what?’

‘May I just add,’ Kristoff held up a nervous hand, ‘that I don’t feel comfortable with the fact that our fate rests in the paws of a flying cat.’

‘Exceed,’ Happy and Emma corrected at the same time.

The blond frowned, ‘Does it matter at this point?’

‘Aye, sir,’ Happy huffed. ‘It offends me that you can’t bother to learn the correct terminology. I might just let you die whilst saving everyone else.’

‘Happy!’

‘What?’ The creature questioned innocently. ‘I won’t actually let him die, but he doesn’t have to know that.’
David stepped in, wanting to get everyone back on track before they lost track of time. ‘No one’s going to die today.’ He then motioned to his daughter, adamant on hearing the rest of her plan. ‘Please, Emma, continue.’

‘Thanks, Dad,’ nodded the blonde.

Anna’s eyes widened, ‘Wait, how can she be your daughter?’

‘Long story,’ interjected Elsa. ‘Once we survive this curse, I’m sure that they would be happy to tell you all about it.’

‘Right,’ agreed Emma. ‘The plan is simple; I have a spell that would be able to reverse the effects of the spell, but it’s going to empty my secondary container and it will take me some time before I’d be able to use my third.’

‘Hold on,’ Mary Margaret interjected, ‘Just how powerful have you become in the time that you’ve been away?’

Emma gave the woman a look.

‘Right, sorry.’ The raven haired nodded her head. ‘Not the time.’

‘If you’ve had this spell all along,’ Regina spoke up, narrowing her eyes at Emma, ‘then why haven’t you suggested it before? Seems like an important factoid that we all should have been informed of, wouldn’t you say?’

‘Because I didn’t want to use it,’ explained Emma, pulling her mouth into a thin line. ‘It’s forbidden magic, and the times I have used it I had the gods’ permission. I’m going to get into some serious trouble after this.’

‘So,’ added Elsa, frowning slightly. ‘One pressing matter at a time then?’

Emma nodded her head begrudgingly, then continued, ‘Happy would be distracting Gold during that time by stealing the sorcerer’s hat.’ The blonde turned her head to where Happy was seated, looking a little pale. ‘You up for it, little buddy?’

‘Sure,’ Happy’s voice barely reached a whisper as he paled even more. ‘I’ve lived a long and happy life so far. Death is only an illusion of time.’

Emma pursed her lips, not quite sure how to respond to that, nor did she think that she could unpack that baggage right then.

‘What about us?’ Mary Margaret questioned. ‘What do you need us to do?’

The blonde blew out a breath and placed her hands on her hips, glancing over to Happy who shared the same look.

‘Well,’ Emma began cautiously, already aware of the pending look on Regina’s face. It was as if the woman was simply waiting to be given a reason to snap. ‘I’m still recharging and it will take at least a little while longer. The spell will strike before I’m ready.’

David and Mary Margaret shared a look with one another, but remained silent. It was an impossible situation, but they could trust Emma to handle it.

Regina, on the other hand, may have just popped a blood vessel.
The sorceress reached forward and grabbed onto Emma’s wrist pulling her aside for a private conversation. She shot everyone else a nasty glare, spurring them on to either look to the ceiling or floor, or pretend that they were in deep conversation with one another.

‘I will not allow you to deal with this situation alone,’ hissed Regina furiously. ‘The last time you did you became a mother.’

Emma frowned, ‘I won’t be alone. I have Happy, Anna, and since this is an ice spell of a sort, Elsa would be immune as well.’

Regina gave the dragon a condescending look. ‘Oh, well now I feel much better,’ she growled sarcastically. ‘You have Princess Popsicle, an Alley Cat and a walking, talking, smiling Daffodil to protect you from a raging bitch of Chaos. Shall I have lasagna waiting for you at home once you return as the valiant heroes?’

Had Emma not been as tired as she was, she might’ve snapped two sentences earlier, but she could understand where Regina was coming from. That her patience was wearing thin. That there was conversation she wanted to have without interference such as this.

Reaching forward, Emma placed her hands onto Regina’s shoulders. For the time being, it at least calmed the woman down enough so that she could hear what the dragon wanted to say.

‘I’m going to be fine, okay?’ The dragon reassured. ‘You guys are stuck with me. Forever. Whether you like it or not.’ Emma moved her hands up to cup Regina’s cheeks. ‘I’m not intending to leave any time soon, Regina.’

Tears welled up in the sorceress’ eyes as she moved her hands to place them over Emma’s. She squeezed the calloused digits softly and gave the blonde a stern look.

‘I’ve lost love once before, Emma,’ she ground out. ‘I won’t lose it again.’

Emma smiled affectionately, ‘Well, its a good thing I’m stubborn. Hell will freeze over before I let something as small as death come between us.’ The dragon stroked Regina’s cheeks with her thumbs. ‘Too much time has been wasted already.’

Regina nodded her head in agreement. She took a moment just to appreciate the green, gold orbs as she stared into them deeply. Then, she sobered, remembering their surroundings. She pulled from Emma’s touch as she dropped her hands to her sides.

The dragon did the same, eyes still lingering on Regina. She then gave a determined nod to herself in order to spur her body into action. She turned towards Belle and locked eyes with the redhead.

‘Let’s get you guys ready to go.’

* 

Emma was terrible at goodbyes.

That much was clear.

If she said the horrid word, then it would be admitting she might not see someone again.

So, she had simply kissed Henry, Neal and her baby girl’s foreheads and offered Belle a tight embrace before they stepped through the portal.
It took all of her strength not to cry then, wondering if this was how her mother felt when her father had run off to put her through the wardrobe. She has only known of the small demigod’s existence for less than twelve hours and she already knew that the small creature had complete control over her. Emma was going to do everything in her power to make sure that little one was going to return to Storybrooke and into the safety of her arms.

The blonde couldn’t help but glare at the vault that was now directly in front of her. She had accompanied Regina all the way there, but now that the woman was moments away from sealing herself inside the blonde was nauseous.

Their fingers intertwined as the weight of separation loomed over their heads as well as the reality of what was to come. It made them both uncertain and unable to face one another. The women stood staring at the vault’s entrance as they squeezed their hands together as tightly as they could.

‘You need to go,’ informed Regina, a sigh escaping her luscious lips. ‘The spell is moments away and you should not be anywhere near me when—’

‘Just shut it, okay?’ Emma huffed out, refusing to look towards the brunette. ‘Let me have this for a few seconds; you, me and this brief moment of sanity. I need this just as much as you do.’

Regina rolled her eyes and turned towards the blonde, drawling sarcastically, ‘Have I ever told you what a romantic you are, Miss Swan?’

‘It wouldn’t hurt to mention it from time to time,’ informed Emma with a cheeky grin. She faced the brunette and found herself amused by the look on the former queen’s face. ‘Look, ‘Gina, I know that you’re beating yourself up over what happened with Robin, but it’s not your fault.’

The sorceress frowned in disagreement. How was it not her fault? This entire mess was her fault because she wanted to hold on to something that was a complete and utter lie. She was afraid of what she had felt for Emma; of the intensity of her feelings and how she couldn’t remember it having ever been like this before.

‘Emma, of course it’s my—’

‘Nuh-uh,’ Emma shook her head. ‘You had your say last night. It’s my turn now.’ The blonde smiled softly as she reached up and tucked a stray lock of hair behind Regina’s ear. ‘Losing Daniel the way you did... that had been hard on you. You didn’t think you could find love again, and then Tinkerbell comes along and tells you that you can with him. I know what he meant to you and how hard it must have been to let him go.’

Regina stared at the dragon, unable to form a coherent sentence. She remained silent in order to obey Emma’s orders as she tried to listen to every word that left the blonde’s lips.

‘Look, Regina, I’ve had three years to sort through my crap,’ continued the blonde, releasing a labored sigh. ‘You’ve only had a couple of months. Not to mention, Robin’s been messing with your head and Eris, too. I’m sure she’s partially to blame for some of this shit-show anyways. I mean, she is casting the Spell of Shattered Sights, so...’

She nodded her head in agreement, still trying to determine exactly where Emma was going with this conversation.

‘My point,’ Emma emphasized the two words meaningfully, ‘is that I understand you. That I know you’re beating yourself up over the fact that we just welcomed a new Swan into the world. I also know that you think you don’t deserve this... us.’
‘Well, I certainly haven’t earned it,’ snapped Regina incredulously. She tore her hand from Emma’s and glared up defiantly at the blonde. ‘Have you honestly not been paying attention to how awful I’ve been to you? To the way I’ve treated you? How can you think that I deserve even a moment of your time?’

‘Because I know you’re a good person, Regina,’ stated Emma firmly, taking Regina by her shoulders. ‘I know you. I know that you pretend to read comic books just so that you can put Henry to bed every night. I know you don’t like it when different foods touch each other in your plate. And I know that when you see a shooting star, you cross your fingers on both hands, scrunch up your nose... and you make a wish. If this is about deserving and not deserving, and I get to say what I want, then I want someone like you. I deserve someone like you, Regina.’

A look of awe passed over Regina’s olive features, mild shock filtering into her eyes. ‘How... how do you know all those things? I... Henry doesn’t even know about my silly wishes on shooting stars.’

‘Because I pay attention,’ explained Emma. She then shrugged nonchalantly, glancing down as an embarrassed flush graced her cheeks. ‘I... I also could never stay away too long. If I ever found myself in a time that you were in, then I’d check on you.’ The dragon sighed. ‘It’s creepy and stupid, but it helped keep me sane and helped prevent me from rushing back home.’

‘I find it quite flattering, actually,’ smiled Regina, cupping Emma’s cheek. A regretful look then passed over her, knowing that time was short and of the essence. ‘As much as I want to continue this conversation, you need to leave. The spell is moments away from striking and—’

Emma cut Regina off by crashing their lips together. She effectively caused the brunette melt in her grasp, drawing nothing but a surprised yet pleased hum in the back of her throat. When she finally pulled away, the sorceress was gasping for breath.

‘Stop changing the subject, Mills,’ warned Emma playfully. ‘I’m a big girl, and I’ll make my own decisions. This is the last time I hear about this crap that you’re not good enough for me. I’ll be the judge of that, okay?’

‘Okay,’ Regina nodded, a weak smile gracing her lips, ‘but that doesn’t change the fact that you still need to leave. I need to seal myself inside my vault.’

The blonde sighed, but understood the brunette’s reasoning. However, she couldn’t help but add, ‘I’m not afraid of you, Regina.’

The sorceress’s eyes softened and she briefly, passionately pressed their lips together one last time. ‘But you really... Really should be.’

Then, before Emma could grasp what was happening, Regina slipped out of her grasp and into the vault. She effectively shut the door behind her, unable to look away from Emma as she did so.
So, the operation went well. The doc is satisfied with everything that had gone on. I’m getting discharged tomorrow, but I’m not allowed to do physical activity for the next 6 weeks. I have a chance to update now, so I’m taking it now.

First, of I haven’t decided what to name the kid yet. All of the suggestions are valid and I’m leaning towards two of them. I think I’m going to keep that surprise until the epilogue of this section of the story. I had thought to only release it in the next part of this series, but I can’t wait that long. I am, however, going to give a hint of our new residencial demigod’s middle name.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

*Storybrooke, Sheriff Station—Recent Past*

*A glass of whiskey would sure hit the spot right about now.*

Emma felt like a failure; locking her parents away as though they were wild animals. She was certainly upset with them for the fiasco with the power line, and the fact that they stared at her like she was a monster, but she didn’t enjoy the fact that they were now being forcibly detained by her very hand.

‘I really don’t want to die today,’ Emma muttered as she shut her mother’s cell. ‘I haven’t even gotten the chance to name my kid yet.’

Elsa, Anna and Kristoff were a few feet behind them, too occupied with their own teary farewells to hear Emma’s confession.

Happy was busy rummaging in his backpack on Emma’s desk. He was preparing for what could quite possibly be the end of his life as he knew it. All he needed now was to play the death march and then he would be ready.

Mary Margaret reached through the bars and grabbed onto her daughter’s hand. ‘Well, you’re not going to die.’ The woman offered a tearful smile. ‘Have you thought of any baby names yet?’

Emma chuckled, turning to see that David was invested in the conversation as well. He leaned against the bars of his cell, a sad yet goofy smile on his face.

‘I haven’t given it much thought,’ Emma shrugged helplessly. ‘It’s not like I planned this, you know?’

David shared the blonde’s awkward laugh as he nodded in agreement. ‘Maybe not,’ he smiled affectionately. ‘But she’s here now, so you’d better make the best of it.’

‘Yeah,’ nodded Emma. ‘I, um...’ She trailed off as she bit the inside of her cheek. ‘I was thinking that I should name her after my grandmother, Ruth, you know? Like Rue or Rita? She seemed to be the only sane grandparent I had.’
Mary Margaret’s smile nearly lit up the entire station whilst David’s did just that.

‘I would love that.’ The man’s voice cracked with emotion as the tears streamed over his cheeks. ‘I’d really, really love that.’

Unable to take the emotional pain that came with seeing both of her parents like this, Emma chuckled awkwardly before she added, ‘Or, maybe I’ll just name her after Grumpy. You know, to keep it interesting.’

Her mother gasped in horror, slapping her forearm. ‘You’ll do no such thing. My granddaughter will not be known as Grumpy or Moody for the rest of her life!’

‘Jeez, Ma,’ Emma laughed, grinning from ear to ear. ‘I was only making a joke.’

The woman smiled sadly, ‘You share that flaw with your father; making jokes at the least appropriate of times.’

David shrugged his shoulders, ‘Yet you married me anyway.’

The family shared a laugh at that, momentarily forgetting that their doom was neigh. It was ridiculous, how despite everything, Emma loved these two people with her entire heart. They had caused her a lot of pain, especially in these last two days, but for once in her miserable life she wasn’t just going to take it. She was going to kick Eris’s ass and then she was going to talk with her parents and work through her issues.

They were all going to work through things together. Things weren’t going to end like this. Not when there was so much left unsaid.

Once they regained themselves, Emma took a deep breath and pulled away from her mother’s touch.

‘I have to go,’ she sighed. ‘I have a town to save, an ex to shank and an abusive bastard to shove over the town line.’

Mary Margaret nodded her head in understanding. ‘Be careful, though. We’re rather fond of you.’

‘See!’ David exclaimed, pointing a finger towards his wife. ‘She doesn’t just get the flaw from me!’

Emma took a step back from the cell, ‘Wish me luck.’

‘You don’t need it,’ Mary Margaret and David stated together.

*Sheriff Station—Present*

*Tires screeched.*

*Explosion.*

Emma huffed smoke out of her nose as she stared down at the various items collected from her travel pack that she had placed down on her desk; potions and trinkets of all kind.

And Harald.

The small... *thing* that was seated with his furry legs dangling off the furniture.

She wasn’t particularly sure what he could do nor did she know what exactly he was, but he had been given as a reward long ago. She faintly remembered being promised that he was skilled at many
things, but all he did was sit there with large yellow eyes.

Occasionally an odd sound would escape him, but Emma paid him no mind.

‘Why do I get the feeling that I’m going to have to help fix whatever just blew up,’ the dragon muttered to herself.

Happy was long gone. Having left to do exactly what Emma had asked of him; steal the hat and keep Gold distracted.

Seeing how Happy was an excellent flier, the chances of the Dark One shooting him down were slim. At least that’s what Emma hoped. She didn’t want to start this mission off on a negative note, and thinking that her best friend had been killed by Rumplestiltskin wasn’t helping at all.

‘Emma?’ Elsa questioned, gaining the blonde’s attention. She stood near the door, having been staring at the odd creature that was breathing heavily. ‘Um, what exactly is that?’

The dragon glanced over to Harald before shrugging her shoulders casually. ‘Oh, his name is Harald; the little monster that dwells in my travel pack. I thought that when Eris took the Apple of Discord she killed the little guy, but turns out that he had just been hibernating.’ Emma glanced back down, mixing various potions together whilst Elsa’s frown only increased.

The queen then muttered under her breath, ‘Thank you, that seems to clarify everything.’

‘Man, we just can’t seem to catch a break,’ Anna huffed as she entered the office. ‘Kristoff is really mad at me... or well, his cursed self is mad at me...’

‘It’ll be alright,’ reassured Elsa, drawing her sibling in for a brief embrace. ‘You’re immune. We all are.’ When she pulled away, the queen offered Anna a soft smile. ‘And we’re together.’

‘Yeah,’ added Emma, not looking up from a small notebook as she dragged her finger down the page. She frowned in concentration and then added another blue vile to the potion she was concocting. ‘I’m the savior, so I’m sure it’ll be fine. Besides, I have to name my kid first. I’m not dying before that happens.’

‘So, uh, speaking of the little one...’ Anna trailed off as she rocked back and forth on her heels. She kept her hands meekly behind her back as she eyed the blonde interestedly. ‘How exactly does it work if you two conceived her last night, but, uh, she’s already... you know... born?’

Emma looked up from the potion as she shook it intensely, ‘You’re asking me how a goddess conceived, got pregnant and gave birth to my kid all in the same night?’

Anna glanced uncertainly towards Elsa, who stared at her with raised eyebrows. The princess swallowed thickly before turning back towards the dragon, ‘...Yes?’

Shrugging, Emma looked back towards her concoction. She shook it until it began to take a strange green and purple color. ‘Fair enough. Gods and goddesses aren’t like us. Sure we’re essentially all spawn from Mother Gaia, but they don’t necessarily have the same cycles that we do. When they make a child—the women at least—they put a bunch of things together or spawn their kids from a crack in their head.’

‘And your child is...?’

‘A bunch of things put together,’ explained Emma, resuming the shaking of the bottle in her hand. ‘An Apple of Discord, my DNA, with strife, chaos and discord thrown into the mix.’
A frown graced Anna’s features as she tried to piece the puzzle in her mind together. She opened and closed her mouth repeatedly, ‘So... she’s, essentially, an apple?’

‘Athena’s essentially a brain tumor that sprouted from a crack in Zeus’s head and Helen of Troy was hatched from an egg,’ reasoned Emma. ‘Anymore questions or can we get back to saving the town?’

‘Is being a "savior" like an actual job around here?’ Anna questioned as she raised an eyebrow. ‘Because, not to be mean, but that sounds exhausting.’

Emma grumbled as she cracked her neck to the left, then to the right, ‘You have no idea. I’m also, like, Hephaestus’s champion or something. He gives me quests, I complete them to either preserve the timeline, life as we know it or because I ran out of coin and I’m too lazy to hunt.’

Anna placed her hands on her hips, ‘After this we have got to sit down and have one long discussion, because your adventures sound amazing.’

The dragon round the desk and with a wave of her hand allowing all the items that she had been using to disappear into her travel pack on the floor. She kept the small, now glowing white, potion in her hand as she stepped towards the women.

‘Not as glamorous as it sounds,’ shrugged Emma. ‘Especially when you’ve been covered in griffin guts for half of the time.’ The dragon held the potion out towards Anna. ‘Okay, this is a very, very, very dangerous potion. It’s not supposed to be used against anyone that comes in here from town, but on creatures that Eris has no doubt unleashed in the woods. They often stray from their paths because... you know... the whole chaos thing.’

‘Wait,’ Anna frowned. ‘I’m supposed to stay here?’

Waving her hand once more, a sword appeared in Emma’s free hand. She then held it out as well. ‘This is what you’ll use to keep the idiots at bay,’ informed Emma. ‘They all might be under a curse that fuels their hatred, but they’re not stupid enough to come at someone holding a weapon.’

‘Elsa,’ the ginger turned towards her sibling, a pleading look on her face. ‘I can help! I want to help. Eris imprisoned me and Kristoff for thirty years. She made me put you into that urn. I am as much involved in this as you are!’

‘Anna, I’m sorry, but I’ve seen what Eris’s creatures can do.’ Elsa glanced towards Emma, sharing a look with her friend. ‘Someone has to stay here with everyone else, and I refuse to let any harm come to you.’

‘Agreed,’ nodded Emma, waving her hand so that her travel pack appeared on her back.

Then, her leather jacket and jeans were swapped for her sleeveless, black waistcoat, her tight black leather pants, accompanied with leather boots. Then, last of all her upper body—breasts—covered by her selected strip of white cloth.

‘We just found you, and I’d rather not see Elsa lose you again.’ The dragon turned towards her friend and smirked. ‘Let’s go bitch hunting.’

The ginger leaned closer to her sister, struggling to balance both the sword and the surprisingly heavy potion.

‘She scares me a little, too.’
Elsa hummed in agreement.

The dragon walked off to prepare a last few things before they left the station. Anna reached for her sister as best she could given the additional weight.

‘Elsa, I don’t like this,’ informed the ginger. ‘I know a lot about this spell too, and about Eris.’

‘Anna,’ Elsa cupped her sister’s cheek, ‘you’re the smartest person I know, and you’re probably right; you could be able to help, but you’re also my sister and you need to stay safe. Even with my powers, I was relatively defenseless against Eris’s creatures. Eris is a problem that Emma and I need to solve.’

Glancing into the direction of the dragon, Anna frowned worriedly as she watched her rummage through some of the desks in the station.

‘Do you trust Emma?’ Anna questioned skeptically. ‘I mean, she is a dragon.’

Elsa smiled fondly as she nodded her head, ‘Explicitly. She’s my friend.’

Anna smiled, ‘Then go.’

Before Elsa could respond, a loud crash interrupted her. The two siblings turned towards Emma, expecting that she had been the source of the sound. However, Emma was staring up at the them from the drawer that she had been rummaging through as if she had expected the sound to have come from them.

A disembodied voice filtered from the janitorial closet, annoyed and frustrated, ‘I told you to let me handle the device!’

‘Well, Emma entrusted me with it, because you tend to wreck things with your paw like hands!’

A gasp. ‘You take that back, Mulan Fa!’

‘It’s Fa Mulan, imbecile!’

Elsa and Anna stepped out of the office just as Emma hurried her way over to the closet. She yanked the door open to reveal both Ruby and Mulan.

The she-wolf was hanging upside down from the series of racks, a scowl present on her face.

The warrior on the other hand was trying to get her large boot out of a bucket.

Smirking, Emma placed a hand on her hip, ‘You guys sure know how to pick your moments. You couldn’t have come at a worse time.’

A grown escaped Ruby, ‘Seriously? What did you guys do? Went and got yourselves cursed again?’

Introductions took all of a few seconds whilst catching both women up with the past few months took a few minutes. The five women had moved to Emma’s office so that they could have some privacy away from the three cursed people.

Emma told them about the ice wall, about the cave in with Elsa, about Eris coming to Storybrooke and the baby that they had together. All the while the two women listened with wide and shocked eyes. She also went into great detail about Gold and his plan to cleave himself of the dagger, and how Emma had sent the kids and Belle to her pocket dimension to keep them safe. The blonde finally came to a close with the Spell of Shattered Sights and how Emma was going to use a time
spell to reverse it.

‘Clearly,’ began Ruby, ‘we’ve come at a bad time. So, we’ll just get out of your hair and come back later.’

Emma winced slightly, scratching the back of her neck, ‘Yeah, not possible. Eris closed the door to dimension traveling. People can get in, but they can’t get out.’

Mulan crossed her arms over her chest and gave Ruby a stern look, ‘And we weren’t going to leave anyways because Emma is our friend and we’d never abandon her in her time of need.’

Ruby sighed, ‘Right.’

The warrior turned towards Emma as she placed her hands onto her hips, ‘How can we help?’

A smile graced Emma’s features, ‘I thought that you’d never ask.’

* * *

The door to Gold’s Pawnshop flew with a crash and the two blonde’s made haste as they entered. Emma didn’t particularly care that she had just smashed the window of the glass door, mostly because it was once again clear that Gold was nothing but a backstabbing liar. Especially when he was most likely going to sentence her to a same fate that had befallen the fae.

Emma would help Belle fix it later if she wanted to take over the store.

As expected, the town was in chaos. Everyone might as well be tearing their loved ones to shreds. Especially given the fact that at least every second person had a crossbow.

The dragon honestly hoped that they dealt with the spell and Gold as quickly as they could because she was honestly getting too old for this.

‘Okay,’ started Elsa. ‘What’s the plan from here on out? Ruby and Mulan are busy with... "recon" to see what monstrosities Eris has guarding her spell, Happy is hopeful still alive and keeping Rumplestiltskin occupied and Anna is safe in the station along with your parents and her fiancé. However, you weren’t very specific in what we are going to do in all of this.’

Emma began to rummage around in the store, opening various cabinets and drawers with a concentrating from.

‘Before we wouldn’t have had the time, but given that Ruby and Mulan are scoping out the scene I might be able to whip up some fire to refuel my magic. It could come in handy, especially now that we’re going to have to face a very pissed off Dark One. He’d been calling Belle all afternoon before the spell struck and it’s safe to say that I won’t be his favorite person in the world once he finds out that I’m the one keeping Belle from him.’

The queen frowned and crossed her arms over her chest, ‘Couldn’t we just have lit a fire in the loft’s fireplace? It would be much faster than going through the trouble of concocting some strange potion or whatever you need to create magical flames.’

Glancing up, Emma shook her head, ‘It doesn’t work like that. A regular fire like that is the equivalent of...’ she trailed off as she considered what to compare it to. ‘Well, like a breadcrumb. I also can’t eat my own flame to restore the magic that I’d lost. I need a flame made from magic, and given that Happy’s a little occupied right now, I’ll have to deal with it on my own. No, I need something with more than a little kick; something that’s even better than anything little buddy could
put together.’

The radio crackled inside Emma’s travel pack, Ruby’s voice filtering through. With a wave of her hand, the device appeared in the blonde’s grasp.

‘Say again, Rubes?’

The brunette’s voice barely reached above a whisper. They could also here the rustling of leaves, signaling that the two women were no doubt in hiding, ‘Just found the lair you pointed out on the map. There’s about a dozen of those snow demons you mentioned surrounding the entrance and even more in the forest. We don’t know how many is in the cave itself.’

‘Thanks, Rubes,’ exhaled Emma. ‘See if you and Mulan can scout the area a little more? I don’t like walking into a mess with so little knowledge.’

‘Roger that, Sheriff.’ The she-wolf declared in a saluting manner. ‘Talk to you in five. Over and out.’

The dragon placed the radio into one of her bag’s side pockets and then turned back to Elsa.

‘Okay,’ Emma crossed her arms over her chest. ‘We need to get a move on and rummaging around in here for supplies is wasting time. So, any ideas?’

Elsa pulled a face, ‘Well, not really, no. The only people with magic in this town is us, Happy, Mr. Gold and Regina, but neither of those options are plausible.’

A lightbulb went on in Emma’s mind. ‘Not necessarily.’ A mischievous smile graced the dragon’s lips. ‘Regina has been known for tossing fireballs as she pleases and ever since we...’ Emma trailed off, a blush coating her cheeks, ‘you know, did the thing her magic’s been somewhat reliable.’

‘Emma,’ Elsa frowned in concern, ‘Regina’s your true—’

‘No!’ Emma interjected, eyes wide. ‘She and I will be the first to discuss that, thank you very much. I’m not jinxing it now any more than it’s already has been.’

The blonde rolled her eyes in amusement, ‘Very well... She’s your something. Don’t you think that the spell would affect her as badly as it’s affect Mary Margaret and David. She would kill you, or she just might burn the entire town down.’

‘Well, she’ll try at least,’ Emma shrugged casually. ‘It’s our only option now, so we don’t exactly have a choice. Plus, one of Regina’s spicy flames ought to fill my container in one go. Especially if she fuels it with enough power. I honestly don’t knkw why I haven’t thought of it before.’

Elsa raised an eyebrow, ‘Explain to me just how are you going to achieve this suicidal plan of yours?’

Emma smirked, ‘Not me; you.’

* 

‘Find that bloody little weasel, you worthless, wormy son of an excuse for shark bait!’

Happy wanted to bury himself underground permanently. Especially given the fact that his current hiding place was up in a tree. To his chest he clutched the box that contained the Sorcerer’s hat. The last thing that he wanted to do was drop it on the ground and risk harming the fairies inside or risk Gold getting his paws on it once more.
‘Sorry to disappoint you, Dark One,’ came Killian’s voice, filled with anything but an apologetical tone. ‘But the small creature is far more cunning than you’d expect. After all, he had been raised by Swan.’

The ball of yellow fur might strongly dislike the pirate, but he couldn’t argue with his logic there. Happy just hoped that Emma would hurry things along already.

‘I suppose this amuses you, pirate?’ Gold spat. ‘Let me make one thing perfectly clear, I’m crushing your heart either way. Especially if harm befalls my Belle because you did a rather poor job in finding her for me.’

Killian cried out in pain and Happy could only assume that the vile man had gave his heart a painful squeeze. The exceed clenched his jaw and forced himself to not make so much as a sound. As much as he wanted to help Hook, he knew that he would only end up making matters worse. Not only for the pirate, but for everyone else as well. All Happy needed to do was remain patient and keep the hat from as far as he could from Rumplestiltskin.

The exceed sprouted his wings and took off of the branch that he had been standing on.

*  

Night had settled heavily over Storybrooke. The magical storm clouds blocked out any form of light that could shine over the small fairytale town. It was considerably cold, but neither Emma nor Elsa were bothered by the weather given their magical powers.

In the cemetery, outside of Regina’s vault, Emma tossed a stone towards the entrance only to have it bounced off the spell Regina had cast. A considering look passed over Emma’s face, her eyes turning into slits as she blinked. She scanned over the entrance and over the rest of the mausoleum in order to make sure that she didn’t miss anything.

Elsa waited patiently for Emma to finish, knowing that she shouldn’t rush the dragon. Whilst Emma was hotheaded and acted before she thought things through, she was strict about such things as magic. The dragon had made it clear on more than one occasion that you might as well sign your will and testament if you become impatient with sorcery.

‘Containment spell,’ muttered Emma, crouching down on her hind legs. ‘This one can only be broken from the outside. Regina was pretty thorough when she cast it.’ The dragon pursed her lips. ‘Gods, this is a bad idea.’

‘Well, it’s too late to think of another option now,’ encouraged Elsa, placing a supporting hand on Emma’s shoulder. ‘We can do this.’

A sigh escaped the dragon, but she ultimately nodded her head in agreement. Rising from her position on the ground, Emma sniffed and wiped her nose. Then, with a wave of her hand the containment spell rippled before disappearing completely.

‘Okay.’ Emma blew out a breath and placed her hands on her hips as she turned towards Elsa. ‘I got us in, now all you have to do is get Regina fired up.’

Elsa rose an eyebrow as she nervously intertwined her hands with one another, ‘Are you sure that Regina’s jealous streak is truly that bad?’

The dragon deflated slightly, ‘Now that you mention it we should probably have brought helmets.’

The two women entered the vault, hurriedly making their way down the steps. Just as they rounded a
corner they came eye to eye with the Evil Queen. The brunette was dressed in one of her more famous pieces, one that Emma had seen a few times in the story book.

‘Whoa...’ Emma glanced woman up and down as she rose to her feet. ‘Gods... that’s so unfair.’ The blonde leaned closer to Elsa and whispered behind her hand, ‘Yeah... I don’t think I can do this.’

‘We’ve come this far,’ Elsa whispered back. ‘Just stay strong.’

‘Miss Swan,’ greeted Regina, placing a hand on her hip. The brunette’s eyes flashed playfully and with mischief. ‘It’s about time you paid your queen a visit.’ The Evil Queen then scowled as her eyes landed on Elsa. ‘But what’s she doing here?’

Elsa glanced uncertainly towards Emma and took a step forward. ‘I wanted to see your face when you finally learned the truth.’ Her voice didn’t waver as she drew her confidence from the queen within her.

‘The truth about what?’ Regina narrowed her eyes, glancing with a look so cold that it sliced through each of their beings.

The queen resisted the urge to shiver as she pressed on, ‘Emma and I, we’re together.’

‘Excuse me?’

Elsa turned to the dragon beside her and gave her an expectant look, ‘Tell her, Emma.’

The fierce creature, however, remained speechless. Emma was currently too busy examining every curve of the woman before her, eyes nearly bulging out of her skull.

A sigh nearly escaped the blonde, but she kept her composure and took Emma’s hand in hers. ‘We’re in love.’

The scowl on Regina’s face deepened as a fireball appeared in her gloved palm, ‘You cold-hearted bitch! I’ll make you regret the day you set foot into my town.’ A smirk then graced Regina’s lips, ‘I should have done this back when we met in that ice cave.’

The Evil Queen shot a fireball towards Elsa, whose eyes momentarily widen in panic. Emma, reacting on instinct, took a step in front of her friend and sucked at the flame. A slurping sound echoed through the air as Regina’s flame now took the form of a long swirling pattern. The fire then disappeared into Emma’s mouth, her stomach growing in size. Once the dragon devoured the entire thing her stomach returned to its regular size.

Emma licked her lips, eyes wide with surprise.

‘Gods, she can cook too!’

Before Regina could advance on them, Emma shot the woman back with her powers and sent Regina sprawling into her coffers.

‘Let’s go!’ Elsa yelled, grabbing onto Emma’s wrist and pulling her towards the stairs.

‘I’m sorry!’ Emma called back. ‘I’ll make it up to—Woah!’ Elsa gave Emma’s wrist one hard tug and they disappeared around the corner.

Regina rose to her feet, her fury expressed on her face as she clenched her fists. A few stray hair hung over her face.
Chapter End Notes

P.S. halfway through the post the pain meds kicked in again, so I have no idea how many mistakes I made. Please comment on where and I will fix it.

Also, please leave a comment on what your ideas are on what Emma’s baby’s name should be. I’m considering each option fairly and will definitely be choosing one from the suggestions.
Confrontation Scares Me

*Storybrooke, Sheriff Station—Recent Past*

Regina stormed into the station. The sorceress couldn’t remember the last time she was this enraged; solely out for the blood of her enemy. She was going to find that blonde bimbo and try out all of the different methods of torture that she had not thought about in the last thirty years. The thought filled her with adrenaline and pushed her forward. It spurred her muscles into action as she moved, the cape of her dress fluttering behind her.

As she stepped deeper into the building, reaching the office area, she found herself treated to the delightful image of seeing Snow White and Prince Charming hauled up into two separate cells. A grin graced her lips.

‘Well, well, well,’ drawled Regina, sashaying towards her two nemesis. ‘Isn’t this my lucky day? Now I get to kill the two idiots who started it all.’

David leaned against the bars, glaring at the sorceress, ‘Hey! I wasn’t the one that told Cora about your secret boyfriend.’

Mary Margaret turned towards her husband in disbelief, ‘Are you selling me out?’

‘Shut up!’ Regina snapped, effectively silencing the two royals. ‘You both deserve to die.’ The sorceress pointed her gloved finger towards Mary Margaret. ‘Not just for what you did,’ then she looked to David, ‘but for your whining. Your punishment should fit your crimes.’ The queen moved closer towards them, a sick smile gracing her lips, ‘Mary Margaret, you took my first love from me. Now I’m going to leave you with the knowledge that I will take your first born from you.’

‘No!’ Mary Margaret exclaimed in horror.

‘Regina!’ David pressed himself against the bars, looking as though he was trying to phase trough them. ‘Don’t you dare hurt her!’

‘’Hurt her’?’ Regina scoffed incredulously. ‘I’m not going to hurt her. After I butcher you two imbeciles, I’m going maim Princess Popsicle and torch Eris alive. Emma will be mine. I’m leaving you with the knowledge that she would rather be with me then spend another second in your presence.’

Regina moved towards their cells, but before she could reach them, Anna stepped in front of her. She had been watching the whole conversation next to Kristoff, but had not yet stepped in.

The princess puffed out her chest as she pointed her sword towards the brunette, hoping that Emma was right about no one being stupid enough to come at her with a weapon.

‘Please, Your Majesty,’ begged Anna, hoping her words would break through to the woman. The last thing she wanted to do was hurt Regina. ‘Let’s be reasonable. You’re under Eris’s spell. You don’t actually hate Mary Margaret and David.’

Kristoff shrugged his shoulders, ‘It does sound like she has her reasons.’

‘Kristoff!’ Anna exclaimed incredulously. ‘You’re not helping!’

‘Smiling daffodil, I’m not particularly fond of you or your fiancé, so why don’t you go back to
where you came from.’

Regina waved her hand and her magic enveloped them in a puff of purple smoke. The sword which Anna had been holding fell with a clatter to the ground. Bending down the queen smiled wickedly as she lifted the weapon off the floor.

‘Now... Where was I?’ Mary Margaret’s cell door flew open with a flick of her wrist. ‘I don’t need magic to kill you,’ informed the sorceress. ‘Magic is too good for you.’

Mary Margaret glanced down to find Charming’s sword glinting in her grasp. She clenched her jaw and tightened her grip around the hilt of the weapon. Mary Margaret took a determined step forward out of her cell to face off against the other woman.

‘I want to watch you bleed,’ said Regina as she pointed her sword towards the raven haired menacingly.

*Storybrooke, Eris’s Lair—Present*

Emma, Elsa, Mulan and Ruby walked into the large ice lair. There was empty mirror frame up against the far wall as well as the refined furniture that was spread out over the area; a clear sign that the goddess was used the finer things in life.

The dragon and Mulan sheathed their swords, the former causing it to disappear in a cloud if white smoke.

Just as Ruby had informed, give or take a few hours prior, there had been snow demons spread out over the woods and a dozen guarding the lair’s entrance.

It had been quite some time since the trio had fought together, but they had moved together with such precision as though no time had passed at all. With Elsa by their side they were even that much more unstoppable.

Sadly, Emma had come to the realization that she had missed the she-wolf and warrior. That their travel time together those first two weeks was something she still cherished and held dearly to her heart. It was because of them that she pulled herself out of that deep dark hole she had dug for herself. Emma wasn’t sure where she would have been had Ruby not taken her on that trip.

‘Hey,’ Ruby punched Emma’s shoulder, gaining the blonde’s attention. ‘Just like old times, huh?’

A grin spread out across Emma’s face. It seemed as though some things never changed. Her best friend always seemed to know exactly what was passing through her mind.

‘Yeah,’ agreed Emma. ‘We should think about doing this again some time. Happy’ll be thrilled to finally be apart of the band.’

Mulan snickered, shaking her head as she placed her hands on her belt, ‘Let’s focus on solving this crisis first. Didn’t you say you have a newborn now?’

A sigh escaped Emma as she nodded, ‘Yeah. Adventure is probably going to have to wait for a little while.’

A laugh suddenly echoed through the cavern, the only sources of light going out as a dark shadow put them out one by one. The group hurriedly moved into a position where their backs were pressed against one another to watch every possible angle.
Mulan had redrawn her sword, Elsa’s hands were up and prepared to shoot out any form of magic towards the oppressor, Emma’s hands were lit with hot, orange flames and Ruby had her hands into a fighting position as her keen eyes scanned her part of the surroundings carefully.

‘You didn’t think that I wouldn’t say goodbye, now, did you?’ Eris’s disembodied voice floated in the air. It caused our heroes’s heads to dart around in search of the goddess, waiting for her to strike first. ‘I couldn’t just leave you all alone, my love.’

‘Yeah,’ growled Emma. ‘You didn’t seem to have a problem doing that when you left our kid in the snow, screaming her lungs out.’

Eris’s form merged from the darkness, a dark and purple light illuminating her in the icy cavern. Her red orbs struck fear into Mulan, Elsa and Ruby, and made them weary on how to continue as they turn to face the goddess.

Emma seemed to have struck a nerve, but that passed almost immediately as the woman stopped in her tracks. She now stood a mere few feet from them as she lifted her hand into view, examining her nails disinterestedly.

‘Oh, don’t be such a dramatic,’ scoffed the goddess. ‘Our little Kháos is perfectly fine. You made certain of that.’

A displeased look graced Emma’s features, ‘I’m not naming my daughter that.’

The goddess pursed her lips and took a step towards her ex-lover, but Elsa was quick to step in. She released a warning shot, sending a spike of ice off near Eris.

‘You stay away from Emma,’ warned the queen, narrowing her eyes at the deity.

Eris snarled and with a wave of her hand the women, except for Emma, dropped to the ground in a state of unconsciousness. Emma moved to help her friends, but found herself unable to do so when she vanished and then reappear into one of the lavishing chairs in the cavern. Across from her Eris sat as she reached forward for the teapot. The lights had returned once again, though Eris’s playfulness had disappeared.

‘Barbarians,’ muttered the goddess, pouring a cup for Emma and herself. ‘Do you still take two sugars?’

Knowing that the ice was already thin, Emma nodded, ‘Yeah. Why not?’

The goddess set the cup in front of Emma and the dragon had no choice but to accept the offered drink. Eris then lifted her own towards her mouth, sipping it peacefully as though the world wasn’t tearing itself apart just outside the sanctuary.

‘I wanted to speak with you before I left,’ explained Eris, looking up into Emma’s green orbs. ‘Regarding our child, and what is to come.’

‘Yeah,’ sighed Emma, knocking her tea back and then setting the cup back down onto the table. ‘I remembered you mentioned something about how Zeus was ”invested in our future”. Whatever the hell that’s supposed to mean.’

‘I’d like to tell you, but, as you know, I’m technically not supposed to meddle with mortal affairs,’ she hummed, lifting the tea to her lips once more.

‘Or you just like being a bitch,’ countered Emma with the raise of her eyebrows.
A laugh escaped the goddess and Emma remembered back to a time when she would have done everything in her power to hear it. Now, she wishes that it would be the last time that she would.

‘Fair enough,’ relented Eris. ‘However, that doesn’t change the fact that I do love you, my *Salamándra*. You are the only lover that I ever have.’

Emma narrowed her eyes, ‘You sure have a funny way of showing it.’

‘I’m an immortal goddess, whom of which care very little for your customs or interactions. They’re so primitive.’ The goddess dismissed as she rolled her eyes. ‘Treat me gently.’

‘You probably shouldn’t insult my ”mortal customs” if you want me to take it easy on you,’ huffed Emma as she crossed her arms over her chest. ‘Now, if you may or may not have forgotten, I still have a town to save thanks to you, so if you could cut to the chase?’

‘Yes, of course,’ snickered Eris. ‘*Kháos* will need to be severely trained. If she is to stop what’s to come, then she needs to be prepared.’

Emma clenched her jaw, ‘She’s a child of prophecy, isn’t she?’

The goddess’s expression remained neutral as she drank her tea leisurely, never once breaking eye contact with her ex-lover.

The dragon scoffed and dropped her hands to her side, ‘Of course she is. Why didn’t you tell me all of this? Why manipulate me into your bed. Why—’

‘Not only was it fun, but would you honestly have agreed to conceiving her if you knew what fate she would be damned to?’ Eris questioned with a raised eyebrow. ‘A child of prophesy will be cursed to a life far worse than a demigod’s; constant training, constant disappointment, always believing that she could never measure up to the image that is expected of her.’

‘That’s what I’m afraid of,’ muttered Emma, glancing away in anger. As much as she wanted to go off on the goddess she found herself emotionally exhausted with the news that she had just received.

‘Which is why I chose you to conceive this child with,’ continued Eris, not missing a beat or even allowing Emma to catch her breath. ‘I’ve watched you and your pet. All he’s known is nothing but traveling and constant training, yet he’s... happy. He has found a family in you. You would be able to form *Kháos* into someone capable of not just being some warrior who does not hold her own fate in her hands. You would give her purpose.’

‘That’s a lot of faith you have in me,’ grumbled the dragon. ‘You do realize that I didn’t raise Henry for the first ten-years of his life. Gods know that I would have totally screwed that up.’

‘I know,’ reassured Eris. ‘However, I also know that you have potential for greatness, and that you’re a good mother.’ The teacup disappeared in the goddess’s hand and she rose to her feet. ‘I am certain that you’ll do right by my little psycheephagos.’

‘Yeah, I’m not calling our kid *Kháos* or ”soul devourer”’, deadpanned Emma.

A soft laugh escaped the goddess as she moved closer towards Emma. ‘I’ll see you again, my love. I truly will miss you.’

Emma grunted in response as she rose to her feet. She stood in place as Eris pressed a soft kiss to her cheek.
‘Regina is a wonderful woman,’ continued Eris. ‘She is lucky to hold your affections. Even if she has foolishly stood in the way of your happiness together.’

‘Don’t pretend that you didn’t have anything to do with that,’ declared Emma, narrowing her eyes at the raven haired.

‘You always were able to read me like a book,’ said Eris, smiling despite her dramatic words. ‘May we meet again, Em-ma.’

Eris’s whole body morphed into her shadow form before she disappeared into thin air, leaving no trace of her behind.

Emma sighed, ‘May we meet again.’

* 

Regina and Mary Margaret’s swords clashed against one another, the awful sound ringing through their ears. The sorceress skillfully dodged when the woman swung her way and pushed her against the desk with all of her strength. From the desk, a picture of August and Geppetto fell onto the floor and the frame shattered on impact. Glass shards skittered over the floor.

‘Watch out!’ The prince warned. ‘August is very sensitive about anyone messing with his things!’

‘Shut it, Charming,’ retorted Mary Margaret in the same movement she took another swing at the queen.

‘I’m just saying!’

Mary Margaret clenched her jaw and swung the weapon again, but Regina only glanced it off easily. She then delivered a blow to the woman’s abdomen with the hilt of her sword.

Pushing the raven haired woman away, Regina smugly said, ‘Let me know when you’re growing tired of missing, Mary Margaret.’

Hissing in pain, she huffed out a breath before gathering her strength once more. ‘I only have to hit you once.’

She swung, but missed once again. Regina shoved her onto the floor, sending her sword flying. The sorceress grinned wickedly as she raised her sword, ‘I’m going to enjoy this.’

Before Regina could bring the sword down on the raven haired, the woman scrambled to her feet and tackled the woman over one of the nearby desks sending her sword flying. Items crashed to the floor and shattered all around. Regina moved to defend herself but soon found herself diving through the plate glass door. Unfazed by the severity of their struggle, Regina waved her hand and sent Mary Margaret flying through the air as she climbed out of the office.

Mary Margaret glanced up from where she lay on the floor and stared at Regina in shock. ‘You said no magic!’

‘And you said you could keep a secret!’

The pixie haired woman lifted her sword off the ground and narrowed her eyes at Regina. ‘I... Was... 10!’ She rushed to her feet and then charged towards Regina.

*
‘I hate it when your friends in high places think that us lowly mortals don’t need to be a part of your conversations,’ grumbled Ruby in annoyance.

The sensation of being rendered unconscious not only upset her to a fault, but it made her more than a little thirsty for immortal blood. She was not some toy that one could switch on and off whenever one pleased.

Mulan didn’t fair better with what had just happened either. In fact, she was quiet, and once a trained assassin was quiet then you needed to fear for your life.

‘Yes,’ added Elsa, holding her head as Emma helped her to her feet. ‘Not the most enjoyable sensation, I would say.’ The queen looked up towards her friend and gave her a concerned look. ‘Are you okay?’

‘Eris always has some way to get under my skin,’ sighed Emma, squeezing her friend’s shoulder. ‘I’m a big girl. I can take it.’

‘The least she could have done is stopped the spell,’ grumbled Ruby, rubbing her temples in order to get rid of her headache.

‘Oh, but where would the fun in that be?’ Emma snickered. ‘You know Eris. She likes to make a dramatic exit.’

The four women approached the mirror, walking up the few steps that stretched out before the decorative item. Elsa took a step closer and inspected it with a scrutinizing eye. Then, she turned to Emma, crossing her arms over her chest.

‘How exactly will this time spell work, Emma?’ The blonde questioned curiously.

Shrugging, the dragon took a step closer as well. ‘It’s a little complicated,’ she explained. ‘There’s different aspects to the spell. Like, for instance, I can open a time portal and jump through to a different time. What I’m going to do now, however, is turn back the clock on the spell. Time now will remain unaffected, but the spell will be reset and the curse will be broken. A lot less messy than having to kill the caster—which, in this case, is impossible.’

Elsa opened her mouth to inquire what Emma meant, but thought better of it when the dragon rose her right arm towards the mirror. A magical circle appeared around Emma’s wrist, appearing as though it was floating. Different symbols decorated the glowing pattern as it turned counterclockwise. In front of Emma, a glowing green clock appeared.

‘May the gods have mercy on my soul,’ Emma sighed and she began to turn the longer handle backwards.

It felt as though nothing changed at all until a gust of wind entered the lair. The glass shards had begun to return, no longer in their dust form. One by one, they took their place in the frame and restored the mirror to its former glory. Once every last piece was in its place, Emma took a step forward and took the item off the wall.

‘I’ll put this somewhere safe.’ Emma assured. ‘Don’t want this to end up falling into the wrong hands.’

‘Something tells me that dealing with the Dark One isn’t going to be just as easy,’ muttered Ruby, dragging a tired hand over her face.

Emma shook her head, the mirror disappearing in a puff of white smoke, ‘Eris just wanted to give us
a "parting gift". It was more of a nuisance than anything. The real fight’s about to begin. So, I suggest you guys stiffen your backbones. We’re about to take on the bane of every worlds’ existence.’
Well, this is the second to last chapter I will be posting of this part of *An Orphan Dragon*. The second part is now in its early stages, but I am trying my best to make it publishing worthy.

This has been quite an adventure with all of you. I’ve laughed, I’ve cried and I’ve been so stressed that I made an ass of myself with this work, but you guys helped a lot and talked a lot of confidence into me.

I want to thank everyone for their suggestions as what to name our newest addition to the Swan family, but there can only be one. I noticed a comment about having the name being "Ash" and I hope you don’t mind that I’ll be using that for future references.

I’ll be revealing the name in the epilogue, and who suggested it by Wednesday or tomorrow if I feel like it.

Please comment and tell me if you guys want to see a sequel to this. I think that I’ve rounded it just enough to make it a complete ending if you guys think that I’ve had my run of the mill, but I’d honestly like to know what you think.

Writing is difficult, even on an easy day. You write something and then you let it brew for awhile before you rewrite it again like twenty or thirty times. So, as much as I enjoy writing this fic, I want to at least know if you lot agree with me.

*Storybrooke, Main Street*

David, Mary Margaret and Regina rushed outside of the Sheriff station; hair ruffled, clothes askew from the scuffle and the level of worry that their bodies were physically capable of. Their words from moments earlier still fresh in their mind as their hearts physically pounded from the chests; threatening to jump out of their ribcages.

People littered the streets with apologies and loving embraces after the terrible curse that had been cast. However, there was no trace of Emma, her companion or either of the two Arendelle siblings. It proved to be more worrisome than one could say since the curse might be broken but that didn’t mean either of them came out of it alive.

‘Snow!’

Mary Margaret’s head sharply turned towards Ruby, her eyes locking with her oldest and dearest blue eyed companion. She managed a smile, however brief, as she and Mulan made their way towards them.

Ruby easily drew the woman into an embrace, Mulan not far behind and they greeted the pixie haired woman and Charming. Regina on the other hand was far too occupied in scouring the crowd for a sign of Emma and her woefully annoying best friend.
‘Ruby, what are you doing here?’ Mary Margaret questioned wistfully. ‘I thought that you were still off looking for that wolf pack?’

‘We’re here to help Emma with the latest crisis... in a matter of speaking.’

‘In a matter of speaking?’ Mulan interjected before Ruby could open her mouth again. She smugly crossed her arms over her chest and gave her companion a side way glance. ‘Belle seemed to have found a way to communicate cross-worlds; a message in a bottle, if you would like to put it bluntly. Black Wolf simply couldn’t stay away. She dragged me along to come and... visit.’

Ruby narrowed her eyes at the warrior, then cleared her voice, ‘We are here to help Em too. After finding out that Eris was back in town and Rumplestiltskin’s up to no good, as always.’

‘Speaking of which,’ interrupted Regina, trying to see past the two companions’ heads. ‘Where, pray tell, does this gallant hero find herself at this moment?’

Ruby raised an eyebrow at the worrisome tone in the former queen’s voice, but before she could think to come up with a response Regina spotted the blonde dragon. Elsa, Anna and Kristoff was not far behind the heroine; basking in their own reunion, but Regina’s eyes seemed to be glued to Emma and Emma only.

The wolf elbowed Mulan in the ribcage, nonchalantly whispering, ‘Do you think they did it?’

Mulan swatted at her friend’s arm, but was curious at to what she meant, ‘What on earth are you on about this time?’

‘You know?’ Ruby sighed exasperatedly, paying extra attention to the way that Emma stopped in her own tracks when her eyes landed on Regina. ‘Do you think they f**ked?’

‘As always, your ability to stick your nose where it does not belong precedes you and your vocabulary is atrocious,’ hissed Mulan, glancing around in case anyone were to here her. ‘And even if it was our business, which it is not, I believe that is the look of still very much unresolved sexual tension.’

Ruby grinned and bummed her friend’s shoulder, ‘You sly dog. You’re just as nosy as I am!’

Mulan scoffed, rolling her eyes, ‘I am nothing of the sort.’

Emma split off from Elsa and the others; making a beeline towards Regina. The intent in the dragon’s eyes was clear as she gripped Regina by her shoulders and opened her mouth to spill everything that wished to pour out of her being, but she was stopped short just by uttering "Re—"

‘Emma, watch out!’ Happy screeched desperately, barreling with great speed to claim a spot next to David. He knew that he could never reach his companion in time, but he hoped the screech would alert her of the imminent doom heading her way.

In a matter of moments, the dragon’s head turned away from Regina—much more quickly than she ever could—as Emma pushed the woman away. The next instance a stop sign, of all things, rammed into Emma and sent her skidding across the asphalt.

‘Emma!’ Regina exclaimed just before she was rose into the air by her neck. She desperately clutched for her throat; gasping for breath.

Eyes flew to where Rumplestiltskin stood across the street, a crazed look in his eyes. His one hand was raised in the air as he choked the life from the sorceress and his other hand hanging freely by his
side. Hook stood to his right; jaw clenched as he glanced between the others and his beating organ.

‘You wanted me angry?’ Rumplestiltskin questioned through gritted teeth. ‘Well now... I’m angry.’

* 

The last time that Regina had felt hopeless; truly, utterly alone and beyond even a minuscule amount of aid was when Cora had crushed Daniel’s heart in her hand and allowed him along with the remnants of his organ to fall to the earth as though the meant far littler than the dust on which she walked.

In all accounts, one could consider Rumplestiltskin a god; no one could touch him nor could they even approach him. There was little in all the realms that struck fear into the sorceress’ heart, but the deal-making imp certainly had that capability when it suited him.

To their credit, Mary Margaret, David and the rest of the circle of idiots deemed it appropriate not to rush in on the situation as though they would end up doing anything else than more harm or allow it to escalate even further.

Emma still lay across the asphalt, picking herself off the floor—or at least trying and failing given the way that her arms kept giving way to her weight. By assumption one could deduce that her magic had finally run out and that she was exhausted by their current events. One could even assume that she was moments away from losing consciousness, as she had every right to.

It seemed that such feeble things as a time spell took more than a little energy from one’s containers.

Gold moved forward to where Emma lay, his eyes never allowing Regina to fully leave his peripheral vision just in case she came up with any kind of a plan. He stalked Emma, like a predator stalked its prey and snarled ferociously because of the nuisances she had caused him throughout the day.

‘You wanted to play the hero, was that it, Miss Swan?’ Gold ground out through his teeth. ‘You wanted to prove to this town and your beloved that you are more than a coward whom constantly runs away from her problems. Well, now you get to see what happens to real heroes when they get in the way of the villain.’

Regina kicked as she struggled in her efforts to desperately stay conscious. What she couldn’t understand was why Emma was crawling away from Rumple or why she wasn’t even trying to get up and fight against him. It filled her heart with dread and made the size of her hopelessness grow in size; shrinking the thought of finding some kind of a happy ending to their predicament.

‘You’re going to give me the hat and you’re going to help me cleave myself of the dagger,’ said Gold, tone firm and threatening. ‘Then, you’re going to return my wife to me, wipe her mind of this silly ordeal and allow us both to be on our way over the town line.’

Emma stopped crawling, stopped moving all together. It made Regina hesitate, but it filled her with a feeling that she had wished would enter her chest when Daniel collapsed on the floor of the stable all those years ago; hope.

The dragon began to rise to her feet, and Gold was foolish enough to stand and wait. She stood with her back turned towards her enemy as though he wouldn’t dare to plunge a knife into her exposed backside. Emma wiped her mouth with a heavy breath, then dropping her now blood covered hand at her side. Despite her exhaustion, she stood tall and straight, all fear avoid from her lean frame.

‘That’s not going to happen, Gold,’ informed Emma, her voice neither shaking nor haverning.
‘Belle... she’s family. And family... well, they stick together. No matter what.’

‘You think I care about your silly notions of love and happiness?’ Gold scoffed. ‘You’re an orphan, Miss Swan. No matter what you tell yourself. No matter what... these people tell you. You’ll never truly have anyone that you can count on.’

‘Gold,’ Emma stated calmly, turning her head backwards in a flash. Her dragonic eyes would strike fear into any lesser man, so Regina could only imagine what Rumple must have felt in that moment. ‘Just shut the hell up.’

Regina blinked and within that moment, the stop sign that had initially knocked Emma across the road sent Rumplestiltskin directly into a nearby store. The sorceress collapsed forward and fell into Emma’s open arms. She gasped for air as Emma steadied her, keeping her eyes firmly planted on where Rumple had disappeared to.

‘Now that’s what you call a home run!’ Ruby exclaimed with a laugh. She made her way towards the two women as she stared at her friend. ‘Nice shot, Em!’

‘You bloody fool!’ Hook exclaimed furiously, marching his way towards them. ‘Rumplestiltskin possesses my heart!’

‘Really?’ David questioned, raising an eyebrow as he fainted innocence. ‘We had no idea you felt that way about him.’ The prince quickly held up his hands when Hook snarled. ‘Don’t worry, Captain. We all support you to the fullest, even if Gold is certifiably insane.’

‘No, you blundering imbecile!’ Hook shoved against David. ‘He has my actual heart, which he might crush at any given moment!’

Happy grinned wildly, landing atop Emma’s head as he displayed a black, beating form. ‘Do you mean this heart?!’

Regina released a relieved laugh, never before having been so thankful for the existence of the small and hairy feline.

Mulan stared at the object with wide, shocked-filled eyes, ‘Happy, how on earth did you—’

The feline shrugged as he flew off Emma’s head and continued to hover in front of Hook. ‘Pickpocketing is not that hard. It’s one of the first things that Emma ever taught me!’

‘Yes,’ drawled Elsa as she gave Emma a look. The blonde merely smiled sheepishly, trying to avoid the topic all together with her charms. ‘We’ll get back to Emma’s questionable parenting skills in a moment. We need a better plan than rendering Gold unconscious by means of road rules.’

‘How are we going to defeat him?’ Anna questioned worriedly, glancing rapidly amongst the group. ‘He’s literally called The Dark One; the most evilness of evilness that you could ever encounter in any realm.’

‘That’s a lot of evil in a sentence,’ Happy pointed out meekly.

‘As always,’ Emma sighed dramatically. ‘I have a plan to save all of our asses once again.’

‘Well, don’t hold out on us now,’ ordered Regina, giving the blonde a flabbergasted look. ‘Now is not the time to be shy!’

‘His dagger,’ explained Emma. ‘We get his dagger, we can subdue him.’
‘Marvelous plan,’ drawled Regina sarcastically. ‘If only it were that easy. Pickpocketing the Dark One for one measly, disposable, useless heart—’

‘Hey!’ Hook exclaimed.

‘—is one thing, but taking his most prized possession off him is another,’ said Regina, placing her hands onto her hips. ‘Not only is it suicidal, but it’s impossible.’

‘Debatable,’ shrugged Happy. ‘What if we could use a better distraction than a cat stealing a hat?’ Emma filed that pun away for another time as she turned her head slightly towards her friend, ‘You mean Belle?’

‘Isn’t that playing directly into his hands?’ Ruby scoffed. ‘We’re not risking her life like that.’ The blonde gave her friend a sympathetic look. The sound of Rumplestiltskin rising to his feet and regaining his balance caused the floor to shake underneath their feet. Time was not only of the essence, but it was short.

‘We need an opening, Ruby,’ informed Mulan firmly, placing her hand on Ruby’s shoulder. ‘This will buy us just that. We’re not going to let any harm befall her.’

‘Exactly,’ added Emma. ‘One for all and all for one, right?’ Ruby scowled at her friend’s extended fist, ‘Fuck you, Swan.’ She then bumped the hand with her own. ‘Mulan, Happy, you’re on me. Em, you and Regina keep the bastard occupied. David and Snow, clear the streets. Thelma and Louis, and their sidekick, I suggest you help them. This is gonna get messy.’

Anna frowned as she turned to Elsa, ‘We’re Thelma and Louis, right?’

‘Wait,’ Kristoff frowned. ‘I’m the sidekick?’ Emma promptly ignored the man, turning to face the others, ‘We do this together, or we don’t do it at all.’

Regina smirked, ‘Eloquently put, dear.’ As Rumple rose from the fallen store, he began to levitate into the air. Everyone’s eyes turned towards the man, mild panic filling their eyes however brief.

‘Do try and keep up, darling,’ declared Regina teasingly into Emma’s ear.

The dragon grinned, ‘Tease.’

* ‘Batter up!’ Emma loved baseball; the Red Sox even more so. Even when she and Henry were living in New York and subjected to Yankee fans by the dozen she had worn her team’s colors proudly with a grin that extended from one ear to the other.

At the age of five she had been swinging her very own baseball bat procured for her by one of the foster families that she had been living with at the time. She still had the same photograph the foster father had taken of her with said bat along with a ginormous baseball helmet and jersey that
practically drowned her.

For effect, Emma placed her hand just over her right eyebrow as she watched Rumplestiltskin soaring up into the sky then proceeded to collide into one or more houses. The damage to the town was unfortunate, but if it could survive a cyclops, harpies, frost giants and gnomes then it could surely survive yet another battle between good v.s. evil.

‘Your form was off,’ informed Regina moodily, stumbling out of the window that Gold had sent her flying into a moment earlier. She had a few cuts on her cheek and her pantsuit was torn here and there, but she seemed more annoyed than otherwise injured.

‘What?’ Emma questioned a ghastly, sharply turning to face the brunette. ‘My form wasn’t off! That was the best home run I’ve ever made!’

Regina tutted, stopping for a moment to steady herself as she pinched the bridge of her nose. Emma watched her carefully, resting the stop sign leisurely on her shoulder as she waited to see if Regina would lose consciousness.

‘If that was your best, so to speak, then I would hate to see you at your worst,’ continued the sorceress, a playful spark jolting alive in her russet eyes. ‘At best you would have made the equivalent of one run.’

‘Rumple’s the one who just got his ass handed to—’

Emma was cut off when Regina took a step back and a chunk of building rubble sent her sprawling across the road. The sorceress rolled her eyes skywards and turned just to come eye to eye with Gold. The man seemed a little unhinged, perhaps unpredictable. Regina only remembered seeing him like this whenever he was desperate.

She couldn’t blame him. Despite Emma being emotionally exhausted, down by her primary container and using as little magic as possible, it seemed as though she was hardly even breaking a sweat against one of the darkest being’s to ever have walked the realms.

Emma had at least skidded to a stop and managed to keep herself firmly planted on her legs. As always she seemed far more animalistic in battle than she did human. At one point that had frightened Regina. Now it made her heart pound with pride and awe.

‘You...’ Gold pointed towards Regina, snarling furiously. ‘You two are ruining everything that I’ve worked so hard to achieve! If you’d just—’

‘If I’d just what?’ Regina snapped furiously. ‘If I’d just let her die? Let your spell consume her in order for you to cleave yourself of the dagger and selfishly gain all the power that you want?’ The sorceress released a sarcastic laugh, ‘I’m done rolling over for you, Gold. In fact, I’m done rolling over for anyone.’

‘No,’ Gold shook his head, his golden locks falling askew as he narrowed his eyes towards Regina. ‘I took my Happy Ending. You were too much of a coward!’

‘I am no coward,’ spat Regina, her confidence growing when she felt Emma’s presence retake the space on her right. ‘The only coward that I see is standing right in front of me. I am not afraid to give in to love. I am not afraid to let it consume me, no matter the power that I am offered that will undo that love. I don’t need to have it all.’
Rumple clenched his jaw and then his fists, ‘Why should you have your happiness when I am denied mine?!’

‘Because unlike you, Rumple,’ drawled Emma, throwing her arm around Regina’s shoulder. ‘You’re not willing to give up power. You’re not willing to be a better person. You’re a villain; you’ll always be a villain.’

For once in her life, Regina wasn’t terrified of the sound that erupted from Rumple’s throat. In fact, she couldn’t remember the last time that she had felt that strong.

**Storybrooke, Town Line**

Rumple slowly came to, wincing in pain at the light that streamed into his eyes. He was on his knees, he could at least tell that much, yet he wasn’t bound as he had expected to be. All he knew was that he was no longer with his dagger.

Of all the things that he could have predicted losing a battle against Emma Swan was not at the top of that list, nor was it something that he ever expected to be in the cards.

Now, there he was on his knees about to face judgement for the crimes that he had committed. After the relatively nasty beatdown that he had received, he might add.

Though, when Rumple opened his eyes, it wasn’t what he expected to see. Meaning, he didn’t think that he would see Emma standing next to his wife, Belle. Next to the dragon, Regina stood with her arms across her chest, leaning against the dragon. Her arm was carelessly thrown over the sorceress’s shoulder, almost nonchalant in the ordeal. Emma was fixing him with a relatively nasty glare, but Belle remained stoic and completely unreadable. Regina just appeared smug as ever.

‘Belle?’ The man questioned, eyes wide an fearful as he rose to his feet a little shakily. ‘What’s going on?’

Before the man could take another step forward, Belle held the dagger up towards her husband as a determined look passed over her features.

‘Thank you, Emma, Regina.’ Belle addressed the dragon and sorceress. ‘I’ll take it from here.’

‘You sure?’ Emma questioned, eyes still fixed on the blond man. ‘I honestly don’t mind sticking around.’

‘No,’ Belle shook her head. ‘We need to be alone for what comes next.’

The dragon hesitated, but then nodded her head. She moved away from Regina and placed a supportive hand on Belle’s shoulder. ‘I’ll be heading back to town then. I have a kid to feed.’

‘And I have a someone’s heart that I need to restore,’ added Regina, slipping her hand into Emma’s. ‘Feel free to give us a call should he give you any trouble, dear.’

The redhead nodded, ‘Will do.’

A swirling portal opened a few paces in front of the two women, but as soon as they stepped through it, it closed in an instant. Now it was only Belle and Rumple.

‘Belle,’ Gold tried again. ‘What are you doing?’

‘Finally facing the truth,’ informed Belle, taking a step towards him. This forced Gold to take a step
back himself, causing him to near the town line.

The ice wall may no longer be there, but no one would be able to tell what kind of effect Eris’s curse would have had on it.

‘No,’ the Dark One shook his head, his eyes pleading with Belle, ‘please put down the dagger and let me explain.’

‘No!’ The redhead snapped. ‘It’s my turn to talk. Do you remember the first time you saved my life? You traded for me. I thought I… I saw something in you, something good. That turns out to be a lie; a manipulation of what you wanted me to see.’

Belle continued to forge ahead and with each step she made the sorcerer even more nervous than he already had been. There was a determination in her eyes that he couldn’t quite place nor did he fully understand it himself.

‘Yesterday,’ Belle said. ‘Emma and Elsa saw the bruises that you left on me, and they asked me why I didn’t come to them for help. I didn’t want to dwell on it at the time, but it was because I thought that you could change. Because I thought that you were willing to change and become a man worthy of my heart.’ Belle took another step forward, and Rumple was forced to take another back. ‘And that’s when I… I finally realized that all the signs I’d been seeing were correct. You’d never give up power for me, Rumple. You never truly have. You never will.’

‘You—you don’t understand,’ Rumple tried, tripping over his words. ‘I like the power. But there’s nothing wrong with power, not when it means that… That I… That we… That we can have it all.’

Belle shook her head, tears spilling over her cheeks, ‘I just wanted you. I wanted to be chosen…’ She trailed off as her voice cracked with emotion. ‘I chose you over Ruby because I truly did love you. I tried to be everything for you, Rumple. But I wasn’t. And I… I lost my way trying to help you find yourself.’ The redhead shook her head as though she came to a decision. ‘Not anymore.’

‘Please, Belle. I… I… I’ll make it up to you. I… I… I’ve changed once before. I can do it again.’

‘You’ve never changed,’ Belle sobbed. ‘And you never will.’

Rumple was moving closer to the town line now, far too close for his liking.

‘Emma told me that the spell that lingers here will keep you from ever returning to Storybrooke,’ informed the redhead, tears still streaming over her cheeks. ‘So, Rumplestiltskin, I command you to leave Storybrooke and never return.’

‘Belle! Belle, please!’

With one final push, Belle sent the man over the town line where he collapsed on the pavement in a sobbing mess. The beauty had to turn away in order not to watch him calling out desperately for her.
The Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Well, this is the final installment to Chronicles of Eris. Like is said in the previous chapter thank you all for the support and taking the time to read my fic. I’ve worked hard on it and I’ve enjoyed it every step of the way.

So, I’ve chosen the name Senna, suggested by At Least Emma Didn’t Have To Lay An Egg. One that came really close was the suggestion Ash, which I will be using in the future for when it comes to Emma and Regina’s own bundle of joys, but I don’t wanna give anything away. Especially when nothing is set in stone.

After the few comments that I received prior to posting I am gonna go ahead and try to finish the sequel. However, it will be a little while before I post anything. I’m still deciding on the name of the fic, which at the moment is Trials of Poseidon, but that is also not set in stone.

Let me know what you guys think in the comments and don’t be shy with any ideas, because I need them desperately.

Storybrooke, Heritage Park

Regina sat together with Robin on a bench in Storybrooke Park, watching as the newly rejuvenated Marian played with Roland by the pond. Mother and son laughed freely as they fed the ducklings together, genuinely enjoying the new day bestowed upon them now that the curse, or curses were broken.

The former queen couldn’t help but fiddle nervously with her hands, suddenly unsure of herself despite knowing exactly what she wanted to tell the man. Over the past three days, her feelings for Emma had only intensified and her heart ached to tell the woman just that. After everything that they’ve been through she couldn’t spend another moment without making them known to the blonde heroine.

Which was why she couldn’t understand why completely breaking things off with Robin was so hard. There wasn’t even anything to break off in the first place.

Unsure how to begin the conversation, Regina chose to comment on the happy duo in front of her, ‘They look happy.’

‘Having Marian back in his life, it means so much to Roland.’ The thief smiled sadly, prying his eyes away from his family.

Regina turned towards the man, a small frown coating her features, ‘Then why are you resisting being a family again?’

‘Because I’m in love with you, Regina,’ the man confessed, reaching for her hand. ‘If I went back to my life with Marian, I’d be living a lie.’
The brunette looked flabbergasted for a moment, shock completely taking her over. She had wanted to hear those words the moment that Marian had set foot in town, but they were the exact opposite of what she had wanted to hear now. It made what she wanted to say that much harder.

With some hesitation, Regina slipped her hand from Robin’s own, a regretful look on her face as confusion passed over his.

‘Robin... you chose Marian in the first place,’ the brunette began. ‘I’m not someone that you can order around as you please, nor am I an afterthought.’

The thief frowned at her words, opening his mouth to speak only to be cut off by Regina.

‘And even if I wanted to, I can’t.’ Taking a deep breath, Regina finally admitted to what she had been keeping locked within herself for the past... well, for quite some time now. ‘I’m in love with Emma.’

Robin opened and closed his mouth for a few times, shock evident on his face. It was quite obvious that he hadn’t expected that to leave the woman’s mouth let alone a rejection.

‘Regina... Regina what are you talking about?’ Robin frowned in confusion. ‘I thought... Well, I’m your soulmate. You cannot be in love with Emma.’

The thief shook her head, ‘It is entirely possible. I shared... well, we shared True Love’s kiss. Screw what anyone says, especially the fae and their pixie dust. I never should have let this toxicity between us go on for as long as it had. I don’t care for you as much as I do her. There is no competition between the two of you because it has always been her.’

The thief frowned, trying to reach for Regina only to have her move a few paces away. ‘Regina, think about what you are saying. I won’t be your second choice when you realize what foolishness this is.’

It was ironic really. She had been Robin’s sloppy seconds. He had the nerve to choose Marian over her in a heartbeat and now he wanted to come to her with his tail between his legs. And he dared to have the audacity to say that he would not be her second choice if things between her and Emma didn’t workout.

A bubbling laugh escaped the woman as she rose from her feet, ‘I’m... I’m madly in love with that moron, and she is the only one who doesn’t know it yet.’ She smiled as she shook her head. ‘I’m sorry, Robin, but I have to leave. And I don’t particularly care if you’re going to wait for me or not, because I don’t want anyone else but Emma.’ The queen smiled broadly before disappearing in a purple cloud of smoke, leaving the man utterly speechless.

* * *

‘Are you sure you don’t want me to go with?’ Emma questioned apprehensively.

Anna, Elsa and Kristoff stood in front of her in the mansion, Henry and her parents not far behind. Her son currently held the new addition to their family in his arms whilst Neal seemingly tried to make a jungle gym out of his father. Happy was all too happily seated on her forehead as they bid farewell to their friends.

‘Yes, I am certain,’ promised Elsa, reaching out to take Emma’s hands in hers. ‘You have your own family to worry about now. Hans is a problem that we’ll need to solve on our own.’

‘Yeah,’ added Kristoff. ‘Besides, we need to find Olaf and Sven before any of the fighting starts.
Left unsupervised they can... well... you know... be more of a threat to the entire kingdom than Hans and his brothers ever could.'

Emma rolled her eyes and glanced up towards Happy, ‘Yeah, they remind me of someone I know.’

‘Really?’ Happy questioned curiously and glanced down at his companion. ‘Who?’

The three Arendellers merely laughed at the feline, finding his innocence amusing.

Emma stepped out past the group and then moved both her hands into a circular motion. A swirling portal opened a moment later, sparks flying in all directions.

‘So this is it.’ Elsa said sadly, looking from the portal to Emma.

‘Appears so,’ sighed the blonde.

Anna smiled at the dragon and exceed, ‘Thank you for taking such good care of my sister. I couldn’t ever repay you for what you’ve done.’

Emma shrugged as she grinned, ‘Aw, come on, we’re family now. And family—’

‘—sticks together!’ Happy finished with Emma in unison.

‘Absolutely,’ added Mary Margaret. ‘Now, don’t you all have a kingdom to go save?’

‘We sure do,’ nodded Anna. ‘I hope Hans isn’t too comfortable on that throne ‘cause I’m gonna knock him right off the minute we get back.’

‘And the second minute we’re back, maybe we could get married?’ Kristoff questioned hopefully, moving away from Emma, Elsa and Happy towards the portal. He leisurely placed his hands behind his head as he added, ‘Just a thought.’

Elsa shook her head at their antics and turned towards Emma and Happy. ‘Thank you both for everything. You’ve done so much for me. The two of you truly have become a part of my family.’

‘Yeah,’ added Happy, sniffling sadly. ‘We’re going to miss you!’

‘Oh,’ Elsa smiled sadly, opening her arms for the small feline. Happy flew into her arms and hugged her as best she could. ‘I’m going to miss you all so very much too.’

‘Don’t miss us too much,’ grinned Emma, placing her own hands behind her head. ‘You know me. I can’t really sit still for very long. We’ll see you guys sooner than you think.’

The queen smiled as Happy moved away. ‘I’d like that very much. You all are always welcome in Arendelle.’

Emma moved forward and drew Elsa into a tight embrace. ‘Take care, Elsa.’

‘I will,’ nodded the blonde as she squeezed Emma as tightly as she could. ‘I hope that Regina knows —’

‘She knows,’ chuckled Emma, facing the blonde. ‘But let’s just say it’s a good thing you’re... on your merry way.’

Elsa giggled softly, hiding the sound within her hand.
Storybrooke, Blanchard Loft—Recent Past

‘Oh, David, she’s so precious!’ Mary Margaret exclaimed, rocking the cygnet from side to side, unable to tear her gaze away from the violet eyes.

David chucked, as he glanced to where his wife was a few steps away from the kitchen counter. He set a cup of hot chocolate down in front of Emma and handed Neal’s sippy cup to him where he was seated on his older sister’s lap. The boy eagerly grabbed at it and began to gulp the contents.

Emma reached for her own cup of hot chocolate, ‘Thanks, dad.’

‘She doesn’t look anything like Eris. And I don’t think any member of our family has had violet eyes.’ The prince pointed out as he took a seat across from Emma, reaching for his cup of earl grey. Mary Margaret had now begun to move closer, eager for her own hot cocoa with cinnamon.

‘God’s don’t really have any DNA, so the only think that they contribute is her magical powers and personality,’ explained Emma. ‘Eris’s domain has an enormous effect on her already and as she grows up.’

Mary Margaret nodded her understanding, staring at her daughter in awe, ‘How do you know so much about these things?’

Emma shrugged, beginning to bounce her little brother on her knee, ‘I met a lot of demigods on my travels, and a lot of gods too. I picked up a few things.’

‘So,’ David began, ‘You said that there was something you wanted to talk about? Something important that couldn’t wait?’

The dragon nodded as she picked Neal off her lap. He had begun to squirm, wanting to be set free and the last thing that Emma wanted was to keep him against his will. Once Neal was on the ground, the little Charming was free to take off in the direction of his toys.

‘Well, it’s... uh... well, it’s about everything that happened... and about the... uh... the first curse,’ explained Emma, scratching the back of her neck awkwardly. ‘I think it’s time that we rehash all of that and we finally start figuring out how to put it all behind us?’

David and Mary Margaret shared an uncertain look, but then nodded their encouragement to their daughter. ‘I think that we could all benefit from this,’ agreed Mary Margaret. ‘Even if what you are going to say is potentially going to hurt our feelings.’

‘Good, okay,’ Emma exhaled. ‘I just... well... I don’t know where to begin. It’s... well... it’s been a while since I’ve actually talked about my feelings and stuff, especially heavy things like this.’

‘Well, we’ll be here every step of the way,’ David smiled, reaching forward to take Emma’s hand in his.

It wasn’t perfect, and Emma could still feel the weight of the past few days on her shoulders, but for the first time in thirty-three years she didn’t feel so alone.

Emma could work with this.

Storybrooke, Granny’s Diner—Present

A yawn escaped the small infant in Emma’s grasp as the dragon leaned back against the booth in Granny’s. Happy was sprawled across the other booth, completely knocked out after the long day of
running for his life. There were several plastic bottles of milk placed on the table in front of her of which very few had appealed to Baby Swan.

Ruby was spending the evening with Belle after everything that happened.

Mulan was taking up the offer of rest in the merry men’s camp.

Emma’s parents were at home with Neal and were most likely resting themselves.

Henry on the other hand was keen on exploring the mansion out in the woods given the amount of rooms that place had. It was like paradise for a kid... at least for hers anyways.

Last that Emma had heard from Regina she was having a serious conversation with Robin. Given that Emma had her own small situation to deal with she didn’t exactly have the time to be worried or mildly jealous.

Elsa, Anna and Kristoff were long gone, already in Arendelle thanks to Emma’s world-crossing magic. Hopefully, they showed that Hans guy what happens when you messed with the wrong family. Emma had volunteered to accompany them, but Elsa had insisted that she had her own family to worry about now.

And she was right.

It turns out that her daughter would only consume dragon milk, of which she only had a limited supply and she had no idea how to "milk" herself. It wasn’t like breastfeeding, that was for sure, but that was a problem for when Emma would run out. She hoped that her supply would at least last a few more feeding sessions.

‘You know,’ Emma began, staring down into her daughter’s violet eyes, ‘I don’t really know what I expected from you seeing how you’re Eris’s kid, too. She’s fussy, so you’re bound to be fussy.’

Another yawn escaped the girl, her eyes beginning to droop until they finally slid closed.

‘Yeah,’ sighed Emma. ‘I’m tired too, but I first gotta figure some stuff out. Like where one would get baby stuff at like eight at night?’

A familiar set of heels caught Emma’s attention and she turned her head just in time to see Regina approaching her. The dragon smiled as the woman slid in next to her, immediately enthralled by the infant no doubt passed out in her arms.

‘Poor thing,’ Regina muttered, reaching over Emma to drag her forefinger down the baby’s soft cheek. ‘She must be tuckered out after these past few days excitement.’

‘Yeah,’ Emma agreed. ‘Belle said that she refused to eat anything that Happy tried to procure in bottle form and she refused to let anyone except Henry and him hold her.’ The dragon released a sigh as she slightly rocked the small infant. She then turned her head towards Regina, whose eyes were still transfixed on the small bundle. ‘How’d things with Robin go? Marian on her feet again?’

Regina smiled, then nodded, ‘Yes, Marian’s heart is once again where it belongs and for once I couldn’t be happier.’

‘Oh?’ Emma chuckled. ‘Strange how you had a different tune a few months before. Whatever changed your mind?’

The brunette rolled her eyes, but indulged the blonde anyways, ‘If you must know, it’s because of a
certain annoying woman; green eyes, blonde hair.’ Regina gave her a considering look, ‘You wouldn’t happen to know her would you?’

A toothy grin spread over Emma’s cheeks as she placed and arm around Regina’s shoulders. ‘Mm, you’ll have to jog my memory. I think I knocked it a few times during our fight with Rumple.’

Regina huffed at that. ‘That man deserved far worse than the fate that Belle bestowed upon him. I’d have liked to shove something sharp up his for that unpleasant greeting on Main Street.’ The sorceress reached up towards her throat as though she could still feel the Dark One’s phantom hand lingering there.

‘I never really apologized for what Elsa said down in your vault, did I?’ Emma frowned slightly as she gave the woman a considering look. ‘Because, I hope you know that not a word of it was true.’

The sorceress gently patted Emma’s thigh reassuringly. ‘No, I know,’ she nodded, then pursed her lips. ‘Though, I’m just glad that both potential threats are now out of my town.’

It took all of Emma’s willpower not to burst out laughing then and there.

Potential threats?

Despite this, however, Emma reigned herself in. She knew Regina inside and out. That meant that she knew that the confident, hard-headed, stubborn, sexy, sarcastic piece of work that was seated next to her was one of the most insecure people on the planet. She might not have have always seen it three years ago, but she could see it as clear as day now under all Regina’s bravado.

‘You know,’ Emma began, shifting her daughter slightly in her grasp, ‘Neither Elsa nor Eris holds a candle to you.’

The former queen’s gaze snapped to Emma’s, any trace of hatred or anger immediately wiped away. Regina’s russet eyes were filled with affection that Emma had only ever seen directed towards Henry or Robin Hood. Now, they were reserved for her and her only in that moment.

‘Three years,’ Emma exhaled, glancing at every part of Regina’s face, ‘and I still couldn’t get you out of my head. I love you, Regina, and there’s nothing that could ever persuade me otherwise. I don’t want anyone else but you.’

Regina looked away, unable to stand the intensity of Emma’s eyes without wanting to surge forward and connect their lips. She had something to say as well and she never would if she simply allowed herself to get lost in Emma’s green orbs.

‘When, I went to see Robin this afternoon,’ she began tentatively, swallowing nervously, ‘He had been under the impression that he had the option to choose me over Marian.’

Emma smiled unnervingly, not truly happy to hear about the man after she had just professed her love to Regina and had yet to hear an answer in return.

‘I assume that you turned him down,’ Emma leaned her head to the side so that she could try and see Regina’s face, ‘Given that you’re here with me and not off running around in the forest with him?’

The brunette looked back at at Emma. ‘I did,’ she nodded. ‘I told him that I couldn’t be with him even if I wanted to because... because...’ Regina’s breath hitched as Emma drew closer, mouths inches from each other as though Emma was trying to take the woman’s very breath. ‘Because I’m madly in love with you.’
Had Emma not been focussing on the small infant in her arms she might have dropped the child from pure shock. She had had an inkling that Regina was building up towards that, but she had never imagined that the woman would actually say it out loud.

‘It’s true,’ Regina gave a tearful laugh. ‘And I... I hated myself for driving you away, and I’d convinced myself that you would never come back and it would be all my fault, but here you are, and you’re not dead and you’re not angry with me and—’

She was rambling.

Honest to the gods, rambling.

Emma had waited three years to see the woman she loved look so flustered for her; tripping over her words because she was nervous she would say something wrong.

‘Regina,’ interjected Emma, deciding to put the woman out of her misery.

The sorceress clammed her mouth shut almost instantly, eyes wide and nervous like Emma had never seen them before. She had only looked like that when she had first saw Henry after they had returned from the Enchanted Forest.

‘Yes?’ Regina questioned tentatively, a little unsure of herself.

‘Shut up and kiss me already.’

Not needing to be told twice, the woman connected their lips. The kiss conveyed all that which they had yet to say and wish that they had said in the past. It was like a breath of fresh air to them both, as though they had been forced without oxygen for most of their life and they were only breathing it in now for the first time. Both finally understood why Snow White and her prince was so firm believers in hope. True love was truly worth it.

When they finally pulled apart, Regina cupped Emma’s cheek and stroked it gently, staring deeply into her eyes.

‘Everything’s a mess,’ she choked out, tears welling in her eyes. ‘I was a big part of helping make it so.’

Emma shrugged her shoulders, ‘Life’s messy. It always will be. Take it from someone who’s seen countless of eras pass before her eyes.’

They chuckled softly at that.

‘Though, I couldn’t care less,’ admitted Emma, placing her forehead against Regina’s. ‘Cause I got you by my side and we’re gonna figure it out together, yeah? Step by step. Because last time I checked we made a pretty sick team.’

A smile that threatened to blind Emma lit up Regina’s face, ‘I like to think so too.’

The brunette’s eyes flickered from Emma’s warm green orbs to the kicking bundle in her arms. Momentarily, she forced her attention towards the infant, handing her finger over to the creature. ‘So, are you going to tell me what name you’ve blessed... or cursed your offspring with?’

Emma grinned wickedly, ‘Snow White II.’

‘If you name her that I will spend every waking moment of my existence being a nuisance to yours,’
hissed Regina furiously as she reached to pinch Emma’s thigh.

‘Ow!’ Emma said just to be nice. ‘Calm yourself, woman. I’m not naming my kid after Mary Margaret. I love her to death, but we still have a lot of issues to work through; namely me growing up an orphan.’

The last part she muttered more to herself than to Regina, as though the words of the great Rumplestiltskin had somehow managed to go to her head during the battle.

Knowing it best to leave the subject be for the time being, Regina tugged slightly on Emma’s arm to bring her back to the present. ‘I think that you’ve left me in suspense long enough,’ reminded the sorceress.

‘Right...’ Emma trailed off, returning her attention to the now lively cygnet. ‘Gina, I want to meet Senna Rue Swan.’ The dragon smiled down proudly at her youngling, pride radiating off her in waves. ‘Senna... it means brightness. It also refers to “celestial being apple tree”... I wanted to... I don’t know... think of you whenever I see her.’

A blush rose to Regina’s cheeks, but she hurriedly forced it away in an effort to keep a steady look. She cleared her voice, resisting the urge to coo when Senna locked eyes with her. ‘Why on earth would you want that?’

Emma rolled her eyes, ‘You’re killing me, Mills.’

‘That wasn’t the intention,’ informed the sorceress diplomatically, a smirk tugging at her lips. ‘But I will tell you that, that pleases me.’ Regina paused for a moment, leaning her head against Emma’s shoulder. ‘And her middle name? Beautiful as they go, but I suspect that you have a reason for that.’

‘After my dad’s mom,’ explained Emma with a shrug. ‘Her name was Ruth, so I wanna name my kid Rue.’

‘Your father must be pleased?’

The blonde shrugged, ‘They’ll have to wait till the naming ceremony. They made me wait for at least a month before they told me what Neal’s name was going to be.’

Regina rolled her eyes, ‘I’m sure it was torture.’ The sorceress pulled away to look at Emma, smiling fondly at the dragon, ‘Her names suit her well. You’ve chosen marvelously.’

‘Yeah,’ Emma grinned. ‘My guideline was WWRNUAAN; What Would Regina Not Use As A Name.’

A laugh escaped the brunette as she leaned to kiss Emma, then she slightly pulled away to whisper, ‘I think that this... whatever it is... is off to a pleasant start.’

Emma nodded, ‘Well, I know how to behave when I want to, and I want to make you happy.’

The brunette released a blissful sigh as she leaned in to kiss Emma again, only to pull back at the last second.

‘Emma and Regina, sitting in a tree. K—I—S—S—I—N—G!’

The two women whipped their head to see Happy sitting on the table, now across from them as he held his paws to his cheek in an innocent manner.
‘That’s it!’ Regina slammed her hand down on the table as she rose to her feet. Her other hand conjured a fireball as she glared at Happy. ‘You’re dead, you little furball!’

‘AGH!’ Happy exclaimed, sprouting wings as he took off in an attempt to escape Regina’s clutches. ‘Emma, save me!’

‘Sorry, little buddy,’ Emma smirked devilishly, ‘that’s all you now.’

‘AGH! You traitor!’

Happy would be fine, Emma told herself. He might have a few singed hairs here and there, but Regina wouldn’t actually kill him.

Yeah, things were messy and they were complicated, but when was life ever easy? Emma had twenty-eight years of experience in the real world to go on and Regina had the same amount in a fairytale world that had actual magic. Nothing ever came easy no matter where you were from.

Though, that didn’t mean that there weren’t such a thing as happiness. Definitely not a happy ending. That meant that something would have to end. Life was an adventure, an endless one at that.

That sounded better. An endless adventure.

This was just the beginning.
Hello, dearies.

I will be posting the first chapter of the sequel to *Chronicles of Eris* this Monday. The name of the next installment will be...

*drumroll*

...*Trials of Poseidon* and as you guessed it Poseidon, the God of the Sea, will be involved. Though this time I’ve recasted him as Idris Elba. I have nothing against Ernie Hudson, but this is my fanfiction and I can do what I want and I see Poseidon with a little more... superiority and a god-complex.

Anyways. I thought I’d post the summary of the story and just let you guys know what to be looking out for next week Monday.

Just to add I’m working from Cape Town, South Africa time zone and I’m too lazy to work it out. So there’s just a heads up.

The sequel to the thrilling book, *Chronicles of Eris*, and Part II of the series *An Orphan Dragon*.

It’s been two peaceful months of life in Storybrooke and all is well with the world.

Emma and Happy face the challenges of parenthood with Henry and Regina right by their side every step of the way. The savior and her queen are well on their way to their happy ending together with their children.

However, all is not as it seems. When Emma is summoned to Poseidon’s court everyone’s lives are thrown into disarray.

What do Cruella and Ursula want in the quaint Fairy Tale town of Storybrooke, Maine?

Can David and Mary Margaret keep their darkest secrets locked away before anyone finds out, especially their loving and trusting daughter?

Will Happy ever be able to go a single day without his fish?

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